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## **SERVICE QUALITY IN ISO-SYÖTE**

Case: Crystal

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Business  
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## ABSTRACT

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Recent figures show that while the number of foreign tourists has been increasing the volume of domestic travellers has decreased in Northern Finland. International guests bring opportunities, thus intensifying the importance of understanding methods to attract and retain customers.

The objective of the thesis is to study the holiday preferences of a certain international customer group in Iso-Syöte Ski Resort. The study was concluded in order to provide the entrepreneurs at the area with understanding of how satisfied their customers are and on what level service quality currently is.

The theoretical part is based on service quality and customer satisfaction. It provides the reader with aspects affecting expected and perceived service quality as well as customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction and the relationship between them. Models to identify possible quality gaps, to measure service quality and service performance impact on customer satisfaction were used to create two satisfaction surveys.

The results from the surveys suggested that the importance of satisfying customers' minimum expectations is crucial, as failing in it causes dissatisfaction. Effort to minimize explicit expectations was also found central in customer satisfaction. The functional quality, particularly guide professionalism, was proposed to be more important for customer than technical aspects of the holiday. Overall the service quality and customer satisfaction seemed to be on a rather satisfactory level in Iso-Syöte, however there were aspects that require development.

To conclude, this thesis supplies the reader with clear theoretical framework of customer satisfaction and service quality. The results from customer satisfaction surveys are presented clearly using tables, figures and verbal methods. A concise conclusion drawn from the results and based on the theoretical framework has been provided.

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Keywords: Customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction survey, service quality, ski resort, tourism

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# **1 INTRODUCTION**

While entrepreneurs in tourism sector often understand the importance of foreign tourists, methods to attract and retain customers may seem inconsistent or unclear. Recent figures show that while the number of foreign visitors has been growing, domestic visitor volume has decreased in Finland. The significance of foreign visitors has thus intensified. Between January and November 2012 Ski Resort Iso-Syöte experienced a 35,6% increase in nights spent by foreign visitors. Data from Statistics Finland and Finavia shows that from 14 Finnish resorts studied, each faced an increase in foreign visitors, while 50 per cent also experienced decrease in domestic travelers. The study supports the idea of overseas tourists bringing opportunities for resort entrepreneurs, and consequently justifies the importance of investing in offering guests satisfying, high quality holiday experiences. International visitors are important for resorts; during year 2012 nearly 2,8 million tourists visited Finland, on average spending a little over two nights per person. (APPENDIX 1.) In this thesis the author studies service quality and customer satisfaction in Iso-Syöte, aiming to provide results that could be used to enlarge the volume of foreigners visiting the resort.

## **1.1 Research background and subject**

The topic of the thesis is to investigate the perceived service quality and customer satisfaction of a specific customer group in Iso-Syöte ski resort. The commissioners of the research are two separate entrepreneurs. The idea for the topic originated from the author after working for four years for Ski Resort Iso-Syöte. The observation was made that customers seemed to value service quality, an area in which there appeared to be room for improvement. It was concluded that in order to address the problem some research would be required.

Located 150 kilometres northeast from Oulu, Iso-Syöte is Finland's southernmost fell ([syöte.fi](http://syöte.fi) Accessed 15.1.2013). The first commissioner, Ski Resort Iso-Syöte, offers customers downhill skiing, snowboarding and traditional skiing opportunities. Many customers turn to Ski School in order to enhance their skills or to attempt a new winter sport. The second commissioner, Hotel & Safaris Iso-Syöte, take care of overseas customers throughout their holiday by providing accommodation, restaurant services and a variety of activities. The first commissioners' goal is to

be among the top five ski resorts in Finland, measured by lift ticket sales, whilst the other is willing to develop services offered to foreign customer groups and increase growth in visitor volume. Both objectives supported the need for research. Service quality and customer satisfaction were seen as suitable research articles while searching for possibilities to both better serve existing customers and simultaneously increase the guest volume.

The customer group selected partakes in multiple activities as well as utilising the dining and accommodation services of both commissioners. These groups come to Iso-Syöte through Crystal travel agency, which also has their own guide at the resort. Offering a selection of locations around the world, Crystal Ski is United Kingdom's largest ski tour operator and part of TUI Travel, the largest holiday company in Europe. Crystal markets Iso-Syöte as an idyllic setting that offers fun for all ages. The location near the Arctic Circle and Lapland is used as a promotional tool also. Other selling points include the snow-covered landscape, Northern Lights, suitability for beginner level skiing and the "Ski Resort of the Year 2012"-nomination. Crystal brings customers weekly to Iso-Syöte through out ski season. (Crystalski.co.uk Accessed 15.1.2013.)

## **1.2 Research problem and process**

Based on the purpose of the thesis the main research question posed is "How perceived service quality and customer satisfaction could be developed in Iso-Syöte?" To find answers to the question it is important to first study service quality and customer satisfaction anomalies from a tourism perspective. After reaching the understanding of the subject theory, Iso-Syöte customers should be closely studied. As a result, the following research questions have been set to support the main problem:

- How is the perceived service quality in Iso-Syöte?
- How is the customer satisfaction in Iso-Syöte?

In this research paper service quality and customer satisfaction aspects are comprehensively studied. To construct an overall understanding, literature from professionals including Grönroos, Kano, Kotler, Laws, Murphy, Parasuraman, Pöllänen, Rope and Zeithaml are investigated and

compared. The author's main goal is to create a concrete theoretical background from which the empirical study part of the thesis has been produced.

The theory part of the thesis is based on previous studies and literature of service quality and customer satisfaction. Chapter 2 introduces and analyses the service quality aspects. Differences between expected and perceived service quality are explained and discussed clearly. Tools for investigating and models for deepening the understanding of the subject are introduced. Chapter 3 introduces terms of customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well as loyalty. Tools and model for exposing service performance impact to customer satisfaction and principles of measuring customer satisfaction are discussed.

As the thesis examines a certain group of customers a case study approach has been chosen. A mixture of qualitative and quantitative method is utilized to reach better understanding of customer opinions about the thesis subject. Questionnaire is utilised to collect data so that the questions may be designed to be unbiased and to produce results, which apply to the whole sample. Often questionnaires may be broken down and replicated in the future. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001, 79.) Questionnaires enable large respondent volume in a limited time scale with relatively little effort. (Thomas & Brubaker 2008, 133.) Case study, qualitative and quantitative research methods are introduced in Chapter 4.

## 2 SERVICE QUALITY

*“An acceptable outcome is an absolute necessity for good perceived quality, but an excellent service process creates a distinct and sustainable competitive edge (Grönroos 2007, 71).”*

Researchers and academics alike have attempted to give a comprehensive definition for service. Different points of view and wordings seem to equate to a rather similar resolution. Service is a complicated aspect that often does not include any material component. It is an act or a series of acts where two or more agents are in co-operation with each other. (Grönroos 1998, 49-53.) Customer is always a co-producer in a service process (Grönroos 2007, 123), which is crucial in order for the service to succeed (Gummesson 2002, 67). Service only exists when a customer requests it; when it ends, the customer is left with an outcome (Grönroos 2007, 72).

Customer purchases a service in order to benefit from it. Mukherjee (2006, 5) claims that customer is the input and value-added customer is the output of a service. The world today is said to be small, and firms are rarely able to stand out with new products. Even so, products are often easy to copy and may lose their unique value rapidly. The competitive advantage of services is believed to become important in differentiation. Similar products are available in multiple places hence customers often use the service level as a scale to compare organizations. Currently *how* rather than *what*, seems to make the true difference for customer. The global market place has pushed tourism industry towards totally customer-focused approach, in which companies attempt to predict clients' future requirements. (Kandampully & Kandampully 2006, 94.)

Quality means something different for every individual. Pesonen suggests that quality is every aspect of a service, good or bad that satisfies customer' needs, hopes and assumptions, whether stated or implied (2007, 36). Other definitions of quality in literature seem to agree with the former (see for example Grönroos 1998, 62; Laws 2001; 65, Mukherjee 2006; 32). In brief, it could be said that quality is good if the customer is satisfied.

It is important to understand that as every customer is an individual, the perception of quality varies along with the functional requirement. (Mukherjee 2006, 21) Service is mirrored to personal values, attitudes and experiences. Hence the same situation for one, may lead to a different



conception for another. (Rope & Pöllänen 1994, 27.) It is assumed that companies should offer the best possible solution for the customer using the most efficient method for the business. Even if the method is discovered, the company cannot stand still as continuous improvement and minimizing error are tightly connected to quality. (Lecklin 2006, 18.)

## **2.1 Expected service quality**

Every customer has certain expectations of company services in advance. Multiple factors affect those expectancies. Level of expectations settles the baseline to which the customer later compares experiences. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 29-30.)

According to Rope & Pöllänen (1998, 30-31), expectations can be divided into three categories; firstly the “ideal expectations” that form from customer’s individual hopes and values. It is essential to understand that these ideal expectations vary significantly between individuals. Most customer’s ideal expectations are impossible to fulfil as they often include variables such as cheap prices or no queues on high season. For this reason companies should concentrate on fulfilling some of the ideal expectations *at least* better than their competitor.

Second are the “former expectations” which, according to Rope and Pöllänen, include the same aspects as *image* in Gröönroos’ theory, discussed in Chapter 2.2 (see *FIGURE 2.*). Company image is built according to the field of business, advertising, marketing and word-of-mouth. Previous experiences and basic elements of marketing including name of the company, slogan, logo, symbols and colours affect, both immediately and indirectly, the total image. As in ideal expectations, it is also essential in advanced expectations that they are always mirrored through personal values and attitudes; hence outcome from similar situation may vary a lot depending on the customer. Every customer makes the decision, whether it is about making a purchase, attitude towards the company or using the services provided again, according to his personal conception. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 29-38.)

Lastly there are the “minimum expectations” that a customer sets as the “must-be” line for the company. These expectations might be based on an individuals’ personal background and values but may also be situation, company or industry based. (Rope & Pöllänen 1988, 36-39)

Expectations grow with time as customers get used to certain services and technology develops (Lecklin 2006,91).

Grönroos and Ojansalo (2007, 99-101) have a different view of dividing expectations. In Ojansalo's *dynamics of expectations* (FIGURE 1), fuzzy, explicit and implicit expectations are introduced. In fuzzy expectations the customer has a need for a service but no clear understanding of the solution that is required. One may want to have fun during a holiday without having a picture what that "fun" actually requires. Company should try to help the customer to understand those fuzzy expectations better in order to be able to satisfy them.

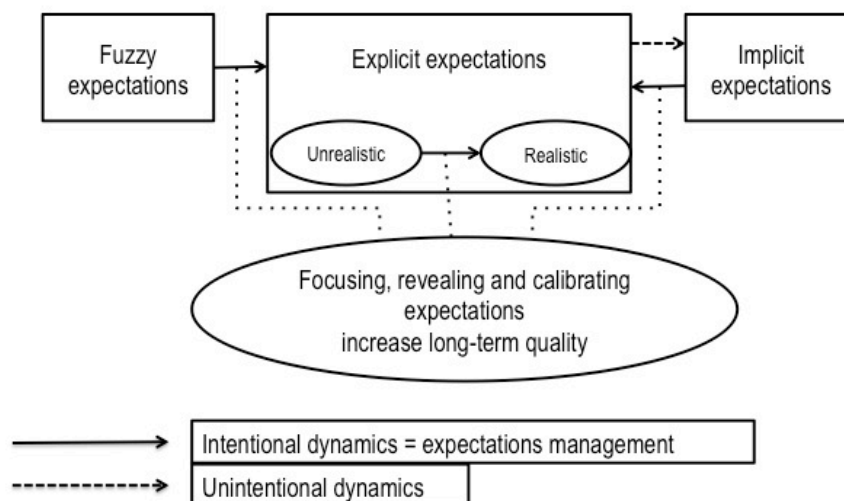


FIGURE 1. Dynamics of expectations (Grönroos (2007, 99) refers to Ojansalo)

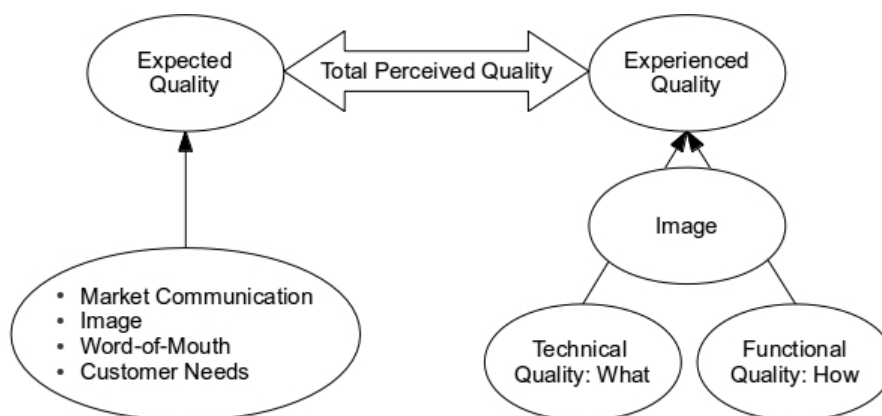
Explicit expectations are clear to the customer but may not be realistic. The more a company promises the more risk it inherits of having customers with unrealistic expectations. Customers should be helped to adjust to more realistic view of the services, for example by controlling the promises given via marketing communication. In dynamic model of expectations services that customers take for granted are called implicit expectations. Often these are so obvious that customers do not even see them as expectations before they are not fulfilled. (Grönroos 2007, 100-101.)

Company image is often a very important factor in expectations. If the image is low, finding customers and getting a good price for products may be difficult. In that case however, there is no pressure on service excellence. High image level can often cause problems with customers expecting better service quality than the company is capable of offering. Upright image often induce customers but may also affect on narrowing the customer base into high end one only. Customers' often compare the images of competing companies; hence the buying decision is often made according to personal feelings rather than facts. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 29-38)

Grönroos explains that customers have certain quality expectations, even if the experienced quality would objectively be measured as good, unrealistic expectations deteriorate the total perceived quality level. Marketing communication, word-of-mouth, image, price, needs and values of the customer impact expected quality. The company is not able to directly control the word-of-mouth and image even though they are partly based on company's previous performance.

## 2.2 Perceived service quality

The two basic quality dimensions, technical aspect of *what* customer actually receives and functional aspect of *how* the service is offered, as well as company image affect perceived service quality. The main influencer is, however, the gap between the expectations and the perception. Total perceived quality model is presented in *FIGURE 2*.



*FIGURE 2: Total Perceived Quality (Grönroos 1998, 67).*

Customers buy certain products to add value to something or to benefit somehow. When talking about competitive advantage quality and the value of service(s) are often thought to be the foundation. Yet it should be understood that separating *what* and *how* is crucial for the company in order to keep or achieve competitiveness. Companies should concentrate on functional quality (how) as it is difficult to duplicate and can be used for building competitive edge by adding value for customer. Technical quality (what) is often a prerequisite and should be an acceptable level. If the customer is satisfied with the technical aspect but not to the functional part, perceived quality cannot be good. (Grönroos 2007, 76) Halonen states that customers regard technical quality self-evident, including professionalism, cleanness, functioning IT-programs and overall efficiency. By succeeding in the previous, customers do not necessarily give the company any credit but lacking in any of the areas may increase frustration. Technical qualities are the absolute minimum level of service. (2001, 137.)

Grönroos does not completely agree with customers being self-evident with the technical quality. He possesses the opinion that customers can often measure technical quality quite objectively as it actually solves the technical problem. (1998, 63) In service industry the solution to the technical problem may still vary a lot and the customer may be satisfied with the service even though the problem was not actually solved. (Grönroos 1998, 63-64.)

Succeeding to satisfy customer needs without prospering in technical quality is often the result of functional quality, or how the service is carried out. Functional quality forms separately in every situation during the so-called *moment of truth*, and is created and consumed simultaneously. It cannot be measured as objectively as technical quality. It may be demanding to foresee how customer experience functional quality. (Grönroos 1998, 63, 68-69.)

Customers' conception about a company's image has a vast impact on functional quality. If the overall picture is positive, it may be easier for customer to ignore possible small negativities. If the problems are continuous, the image suffers and with it the functional quality. Grönroos claims that since the technical quality may be easily replicated by competitors, the competitive edge is on functional quality. (1998, 63-64.) Halonen (2001, 138) divides the quality into technical quality and atmosphere. He agrees with Grönroos that this part gives the company a chance to reach a competitive advantage but stresses that the atmosphere can never replace technical quality. Halonen cautions that the service quality is always formed from individual performance.

As most of the services are intangible and produced and delivered at the same time as consumed, quality of the perceived service is often heavily influenced by how the actual contact situation between the customer and the provider serves. Grönroos calls this particular situation “*the moment of truth*”. The term was first introduced by Normann in the 1984. (Grönroos 1998, 62-63, 68.) Customer being a co-producer in a service process concludes that the value is mutually created which will deepen the relationship between the customer and the provider. There are varying styles how a customer may participate in the service production that are affected by his behavior, lifestyle and mood at the point of time. Emotions either work as a filter or influence the experience along with the cognitively perceived quality elements (Grönroos 2007, 82). Other customers involved in the situation will affect the perception either positively or negatively depending on the sufficiency of their actions. (Gummesson 2002, 67.) Therefore the customers should not only be informed what is expected of them in the process but also motivated to act accordingly (Grönroos 2007, 123). The service milieu often also becomes an inseparable part of the service and consequently the moment of truth (Gummesson 2002, 67). This particular moment is an extremely important possibility as it provides marketing and selling opportunities or *points-of-marketing* which provide a channel for the company representative to improve retention. It is also the only opportunity to show the quality to the customer. (Gummesson 2002, 70; Grönroos 1998, 69.) After the moment the customer is gone and the possibility with it. If the performance is not of a satisfactory level, a new moment of truth needs to be created to correct the mistake or at least explain why the problem occurred. This may prove to be difficult and is certainly inefficient it may also be too late to alter the customers’ perception. (Grönroos 1998, 69.) In service organization, customer will experience a number of moments of truths hence planning and clean execution of service processes is vital for the company. (Grönroos 2007, 82.) During the moment of truth a customer receives both technical and functional aspects of the service and simultaneously mirrors the received service to his personal conception about the company image. This creates the actual perceived experience. According to Gummesson, quality can be seen as the outcome of customer’s and service provider’s interaction where both equally contribute to their own knowledge (2002, 71).

Comparing experienced quality and expected quality forms the total perceived quality. If the experienced quality is lower than expected, the customer will be dissatisfied with his experience. The level of dissatisfaction depends on the size of the gap between reality and expectancy. If the experienced quality were at the expected level, the customer would be satisfied. The higher above, the more satisfied. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 38-43.) However well the functional and

technical quality is reached in opinion of the company, the clients may not experience it the same way. In the tourism industry many customers are offered the exactly same service, in some occasions even simultaneously, nevertheless the total perceived quality varies. There are three major variables that make the difference: clients' individual attitude at that particular point of time, enthusiasm and difference in prior experiences on similar services. (Laws 2001, 66.)

### **2.3 Service quality in tourism**

Tourism industry covers a wide range of contexts, varying methods of communication and ubiquitous opportunities. It typically evolves feelings because of the human interaction. It includes both participation and consumption. It can be entertaining, vivid, educational or creative. It often includes travel, accommodation, information and participation aspects. The difference between tourism industry and other service industries is in the nature of its markets which are becoming increasingly complex, sophisticated and differentiated. (Williams & Buswell 2003, 3-5, 8.) Emphasis on service quality has affected customers' demand of superiority and cross-cultural difficulties may surface when attempting to enhance service quality (Jones & Haven 2005,5). The outcome of a service may often be difficult to differentiate from the competitors' services but the actual process is the key to affecting the perceived quality (Grönroos 2007, 58.)

It is often impossible to differentiate the starting point and the end point of customer value creation from a service experience. In inclusive tours, for instance, the value creation may start even before the customer has contacted the tour operator, from the actual point when the customer starts to *think* about the trip. One may experience mental pre-, as well as post-consumption. Grönroos claims that memories of the trip can so also be seen as value. (2007, 58)

Tourism usually includes various phases, actors and operational functions. As mentioned earlier, service is always produced and experienced simultaneously and customers own mix of emotions and perceptions, including value of money, expectations about the quality level and culture, modify the perception. (Jones & Haven 2005, 5.) Controlling the whole package is essential to the quality of the overall experience (Williams & Buswell 2003, 15).

In tourism industry clients most often make the purchase in advance without actually seeing the product. Hence, the customer is greatly influenced by the specifications and promises of the sales

personnel and the traditional marketing material. These promises will greatly impact on a customer's expectancy. (Jensen 2001, 126-128; Williams & Buswell 2003,13.)

The client has a motive of benefitting from the use of service. The benefit forms from the experience that includes an activity or facility, setting or a context and a delivery system. There are several factors that affect the experience and customers perceptions. Williams and Buswell (2003, 14-15) introduce the following six influencers:

1. *The carrying capacity of facilities and resources.* There is a maximum capacity in every area that can be set for safety reasons or it may be the actual limit of space. Overcrowding may easily impair implications for the quality of experience.
2. *Seasonality.* Often tightly linked to the carrying capacity during the high season.
3. *Safety.*
4. *The environment.* May even be the main reason and source for the experience. Balance between working infrastructure and nature may be challenging to meet. Sustainability issues can be understood as a part of environment.
5. *The packaging of the product.* Or in other words, *how* the service is delivered.
6. *Technology.* Has an impact on both *what* and *how*. From making the booking efficiently to offering a free Wi-Fi for the clients.

## **2.4 The Gap Model**

The Gap Model (*FIGURE 3*) is one of the best-known models that focus on delivery process of service quality. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry designed the model in the 1995. It was intended for managers to analyze sources of quality problems in order to be able to improve (Grönroos 2007, 114). The primary function of the model is to overview the areas where there may be differences in between customers' expectations and actual experience, every discrepancy representing "a gap". These gaps are defined from different phases of providers' planning and delivery process, both tangible and intangible, to reveal difficulties in delivering consistent service quality. (Jensen 2001, 121-122; Murphy & Murphy 2004, 377.) The Gap Model has a strong potential to be applied in tourism sector (Murphy 2003, 2). It can be used to collect

data from “*the moments of truth*” then as an indicator rather than a template, as it reveals difficulties but does not provide answers (Murphy & Murphy 2004, 371).

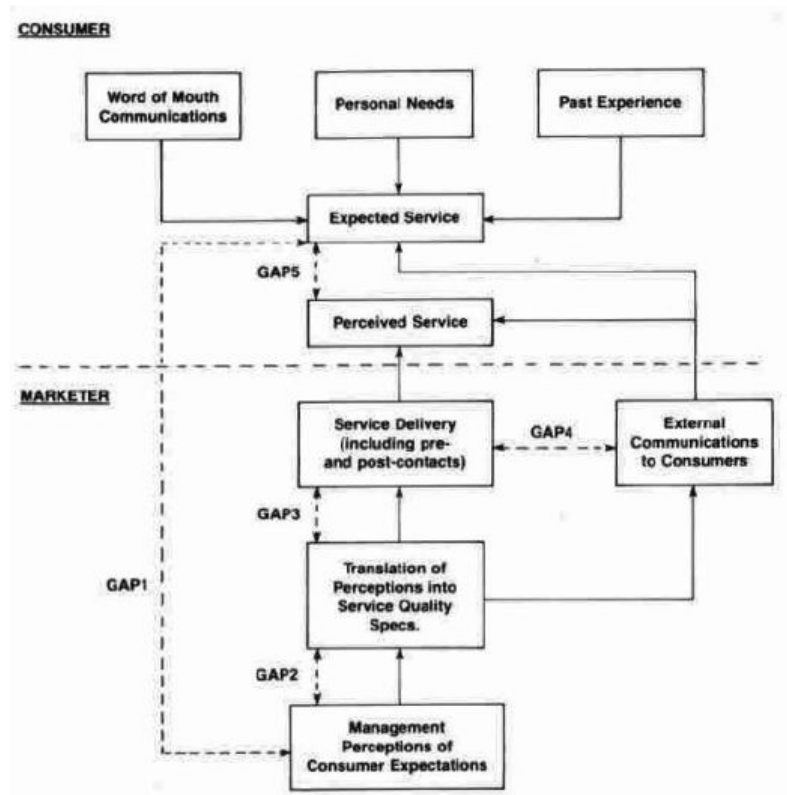


FIGURE 3. The Gap Model (Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml 1991, 335-364)

According to Parasuraman et al. gaps 1-4 in the FIGURE 2 are as follows:

- Gap 1: Difference between customer expectations and management perceptions of customer expectations.
- Gap 2: Difference between management perceptions of customer expectations and service quality specifications.
- Gap 3: Difference between service quality specifications and the service quality delivered.
- Gap 4: Difference between service delivery and what is communicated about the service to customers. (Parasuraman et al. 1991, 335-364.)

The fifth gap represents the previously discussed total perceived quality, or the difference between customer expectations and perceptions (Parasuraman et al. 1991, 335-364). The



primary meaning of the model was to recognize that the service quality shortfall in the company (gap 5) results from having gaps 1-4. Thus closing gap 5 requires diagnosing and correcting the problems in gaps 1-4. (Parasuraman 2004, 45.)

The model demonstrates the way service quality emerges, upper part of the figure referring to customer and lower to service provider. The *expected service* box in the middle of the consumer part has built up from the past experiences, personal needs and word of mouth communications as well as market communication of the company. Service process happens according to service quality specifications that are guided by management perceptions of customer expectations. Marketing communication may influence both expected and perceived service. The Gap Model is a basic structure to consider when planning service quality. According to Grönroos, it may help in locating sources of quality gaps that result from inconsistent quality management. (2007, 114-115.)

Even though the Gap Model has been used to measure satisfaction in tourist destinations, it has its limits. (Jensen 2001, 122; Parasuraman 2004, 47; Zouni & Kouremenos 2008, 283.) Particularly in the service process of inclusive tours where there is more than one individual company which separately produce services. In this process every company distributes its service as a part of a larger product package, hence the service delivery will occur in multiple ways. Customers will also receive service from partial producers whose services are not actually part of their holiday package and to which clients themselves must make an initiative, including local shops and transportation. Jensen (2001, 122-123, 126) has developed the Gap Model into an “inter-organizational”-one. This model emphasizes the complexity of service quality when tour operator, travel agency and local providers are all part of the chain. The model represents both providers and customers view.

Among the various factors affecting to the perceived service quality, Jensen (2001, 129) has distinguished four major aspects creating gaps:

1. Local producers actions before arrival and at the time of service consumption.
2. Tour operators’ actions before arrival and at the time of service consumption.
3. Interaction between the client and the producer.
4. External factors, including weather.

There are multiple methods in measuring gaps when conducting analysis that will be further discussed in the following Chapter.

## **2.5 Measuring service quality**

Several diagnostic tools have been developed to help service providers to determine their level of service quality. However, there is confusion which implement offers the greatest validity (Hudson, Hudson & Miller 2004, 305). Two types of tools have been used and discussed: attribute based- and qualitative measurement instruments. In qualitative measuring, customers are asked to describe their perception of a service process; this method is used in lesser amount. In attribute-based tools, which are used widely in academic research and business, features of service are first described and customers will then rate these attributes. (Grönroos 2007, 82.)

Measuring service quality is often problematic, as different kinds of expectations can be measured. The scale can be best in its category where quality of a given- and ideal service should be measured. It can also be perception of a given service where expectations and experiences both should be measured. There are also problems in attribute-based instruments concerning the validity of expectation measurement: if expectations are measured while or after the experience, expectations are biased by the action itself. On the other hand, if the expectations are measured in advance, prior expectations, which determine the perceived quality, may alter during the experience. Also experiences are perceptions of reality, and expectations always affect perception. This leads to a fact that if expectations and perceptions are measured separately, expectations come to be measured *twice*. (Grönroos 2007, 87-88.)

Most of the studies are based on notion that quality is perceived through a comparison between expectations and experiences. The main instrument according to Grönroos is; he claims that the studies related to development of this tool are the best known and most influential in the industry. (2007, 82.) Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml developed the SERVQUAL instrument to research quality process and outcome (Harrington & Power 2001, 110). It is a five-dimensional, two-part tool to measure customers' expectations and perceptions. The attributes were first grouped into ten, and after later study to five dimensions that measured company's' *reliability*, *responsiveness*, *assurance*, *empathy* and *tangibles*. Later the tool was further refined, by incorporating measures for desired- and adequate service levels. (Grönroos 2007, 85; Parasuraman 2004, 48.)

The method has been criticized for the possibility of the perception estimation already equaling *total* perceived service rather than unveiling the perceived service without expectancies. Other reason for criticism has been the number and nature of dimensions. (Hudson, Hudson & Miller 2004, 305.) Parasuraman et al. correspondingly found weaknesses from the instrument and concluded supporting “SQ Information System” that consisted of transactional surveys, mystery shopping, customer surveys, focus group interviews, customer advisory panels, service reviews, customer complaint capture, market surveys, employee surveys and so on. (Parasuraman 2004, 48)

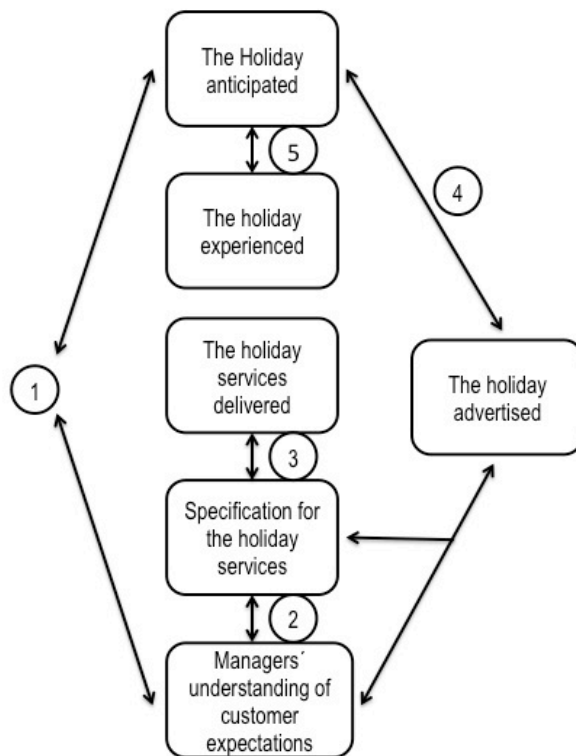


FIGURE 4. SERVQUAL: a tourism application (Laws 2004, 88)

In the SERVQUAL tourism application, seen in *FIGURE 4*, each number represents a possibility for dissatisfaction. Direction follows the normal order of a holiday. Number one presents a possibility of any discrepancy between the customer expectations and managers perception of what customer wants. Number two represents gap in technical aspects of the holiday. Three

corresponds multiple circumstances that may occur, such as delays. Number four can arise from promises that company has made but is unable to keep. Every of the four previously mentioned gaps contribute to the last one, number five, where customer compares the perceived service to his previous expectations. (Laws 2004, 87-88.)

Even though criticized on theoretical and operational basis, SERVQUAL, or an adaption of it, has been used widely around the world also in tourism industry (Harrington & Power 2001, 111; Williams & Buswell 2003, 178; Prideaux, Moscardo & Laws 2006, 5). Services are always different and it may be necessary to add or exclude some of the attributes used in SERVQUAL scale. When trying to understand company's service process determinants used in SERVQUAL form a good starting point that helps to understand aspects services have. The approach should, however, always be customized and carefully planned for a certain company. (Grönroos 2007, 86.)

Research on topic has shown that three variables, importance, perceptions and expectations should be measured when evaluating overall quality. This would allow the companies to get information about what clients expect, how the industry is performing in all and what services are the most valuable for the customer. Even though research has been made to multiply SERVQUAL by importance and measure just performance (SERVPERF), there does not seem to be consensus on how evaluation of quality should be done properly.

### 3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Higher level of service quality often results higher level of customer satisfaction thus service quality and customer satisfaction are intimately connected (Kotler & Keller 2009, 169). Service quality has a huge impact on total customer experience in which customer satisfaction depends on (Jones & Haven 2005, 7).

Been not only a goal but also a market tool for many companies, customer satisfaction is extremely important in business today. Internet is an efficient portal for word-of-mouth and enables the flow of information over borders. It is not enough to measure satisfaction inside the company, as competitor's figures should also be studied frequently. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 166.)

Customer is satisfied when service received please both stated and implied needs. Service quality emerges from customer satisfaction and is said to be the key for the success of a company. (Mukherjee 2006, 19-34.) Tourist satisfaction often requires a match between personal expectations and what is offered in the destination (Cho & Fesenmaier 2001, 364). Tourism industry's highly competitive market conditions force businesses to provide experiences that customers desire as they most probably will not return to an unsatisfactory destination (Laws 2004, 2). Customer purchases service in order to benefit from it and has certain expectancies about it. Only if the service itself and the way in which it is transferred to the customer meet the clients' requirements satisfaction will be reached. (Grönroos 1998, 263-264.) Evidence for satisfaction is an ongoing customer relationship (Mukherjee 2006, 19).

According to Rope & Pöllänen (1998, 27-29), it is important to recognize everyone that communicates with the company as a customer, not only clients that make an actual purchase. Every interaction creates a contact, which transforms into an experience. That experience is either positive or negative depending on individuals' expectations.

### 3.1 Customer perceived value

Customers have become more sophisticated and more demanding, they are more highly informed and educated than before. Most customers are looking for increased comfort and less trouble, costs and problems. All in all they search for greater value. (Grönroos 2007, 11; Kotler & Keller 2009, 161.) Technology today allows every individual to easily access information, which increases customer expectations towards service organizations. Some studies claim that greatest influencers are improved everyday life and ubiquitous service products (Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 243). Studies have shown that *listening* to customers can bring great results for companies (Kotler & Keller 2009, 160). Grönroos (2007, 8) claims that employees are the most valuable resource for the company in terms of excellence in service as they possess *intellectual capital* of producing them.

Customer perceived value is the customer's evaluation of difference between all the benefits and all the cost of the service and the perceived alternatives. The actual service, the personnel and the company image affect all the economical, functional and psychological benefits. The costs include monetary, time and psychological aspects in every phase of the service process. Customer expects costs in exchange to benefit. To be more competitive, company should either increase the value by offering a cluster of benefits in form of total experience or decrease the costs. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 161-163.) Grönroos (2007, 5, 30) agrees that company should provide variation of additional services on top of the core product to outperform competitors with the same quality and price of core services. According to him the supporting services, as a part of a holistic package, often make bigger difference to the consumer than the actual core product. He argues however that most often low prices are not an effective method as it requires giving away the revenue that could be used in creating and maintaining sustainable advantage over the competition.

Relationship between the guest and the company may produce additional value for the customer. The relationship can be experienced beneficial if the customer has faith in the service provider and feels that services are trustworthy and reduce anxiety. For many customers personal recognition, familiar employees and even a possible friendship raise the perceived value level. Feeling of being special, including additional services, discounts and priorities also make a difference. (Grönroos 2007, 38-39.) Pesonen, Mönkkänen and Hokkanen (2002, 103) argue that using customers name is important. One should observe that persons reaction however, in case

that the client does not feel comfortable of staff member using his name. It has been said that intending *not* to waste customer's time is beneficial as perceived value may suffer from bad time management (Grönroos 2007, 34).

In other words, company should either have confidence with the customer or a possibility to offer social benefits of special treating to create additional value to the core service. Hence the relationship itself increases the total perceived value. (Grönroos 2007, 38-39.)

### **3.2 Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction**

Satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or disappointment occurring from the comparison of perceived service and expectations of it (Kotler & Keller 2009, 164). Customers are satisfied if their expectations are met or exceeded. Extremely important for the company is to understand what customer actually requires. (Mukherjee 2006, 34.) Unsatisfied customer communicates the experience more likely than a satisfied one. Yet only a small percentage of unsatisfied customers tend to give feedback straight to the organization. (Pesonen, et al. 2002, 103.) Satisfaction is tightly bond to expectations and perceptions that were discussed in Chapter 2.

Customer's expectation level affects the level of satisfaction. By increasing perceived value, satisfaction level raises which have a positive impact to the retention. Customers enjoying service received are likely to become loyal to the company, leading to re-purchases and positive word-of-mouth. (Peppers & Rogers 2011, 31) Satisfaction may be separated into three categories; satisfied, highly satisfied and delighted. If the perceived service is at the same level as the expectations customer is satisfied. However if the service is exceeding customer's expectations, high satisfaction or even delight is achieved. For example Goodman (2009, 22) states that delight occurs from positive surprise, on the contrary Torres and Kline (referring Kumar et al. 2006, 291) claim that surprise is not necessary, joy is the most important element. It has been suggested that customer satisfaction is no longer a key to success, companies should instead target on delighting customers (Torres & Kline 2006, 290).

High expectations that are met may often firm the bond between the customer and the company, as succeeding service level was high. If the expectations were lower in the beginning the customer relationship rarely deepens as the service level is experienced to be self-evident. Unlike

strongly satisfied customers that often give straight feedback from their experience, customers on “normal-level” satisfaction rarely report their experience. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 42-43.) The outcome from satisfaction is an ongoing customer relationship, loyalty and acting as an opinion leader outside the company. Generally it means that the customer stays loyal to the company, tends to buy new products when launched and upgrade old ones. Price sensitiveness and interest towards competing companies is often low. Satisfied customers may also give ideas to enhance the service. Rational preference may follow satisfaction, but highly satisfied or delighted customers often also feel emotional connection with the company. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 166.) Peppers and Rogers (2011, 49) suggest that past satisfying experiences often weight prior to the new ones thus reaching satisfaction at an early stage of relationship is crucial.

There are multiple ways to encourage customer satisfaction. Providing adequate information about the available options is one method. In the best case it is done prior to the actual holiday, in order to give the customer a possibility to identify the most desired activities and plan the schedule. This may also reduce the possibility for a gap between expectations and actual experience. As well as making the selection of holiday resort easier for the tourist providing information also leads to a greater satisfaction during the actual experience. Cho and Fesenmaier recommend a virtual tour to introduce the resort and activities in advance. (2001, 364.)

Peppers and Rogers argue that customers want to be treated as individuals and the capability of remembering the information customer has given is the key to success, as with that knowledge company is able to better serve the customer. They also suggest other methods to improve and maintain customer value including customized services, perpetual innovation, personal relationship between service provider and customer and lastly appealing uniqueness. (2011, 24, 148) New customers that have received a reference from a friend tend to be more satisfied and loyal when comparing to customers from other marketing channels (Peppers & Rogers 2011, 141). Companies concentrating on customer satisfaction and loyalty are, by providing good service currently, generating future profits. As the method is based on long-term thinking, price-cutting affecting immediate, but not lasting, sales and profit can be hazardous. (Peppers & Rogers 2011, 313)

Customer dissatisfaction results from not meeting the clients' requirements. When customer is dissatisfied to the service perceived he might either leave the company for a period of time or permanently, complain or stay loyal (Gummesson 2002, 87). Strongly disappointed customers



may give feedback straight to the company, through personal networks or by choosing competitors services in the future. Customers are still often only partially satisfied or dissatisfied, occurring decrease in loyalty. (Goodman 2009, 30) If the customer is only somewhat disappointed he may only reclaim if particularly asked for it. (Rope & Pöllänen 1998, 41-42.) Even though customers do not complain, their loyalty towards the company may be 20-40% lower than customers that have not faced problems (Goodman 2009, 30).

The response to any dissatisfaction should be an effort to correct the situation and avoid it from happening in the future. In correcting errors problems may rise with the fact that the staff member customer is contacting might not have the authority or the knowledge to fix the problem. One may also speak to a “wrong” person who does not possess the answer. These are the reasons why companies should always pay attention to both vertical and horizontal interaction inside the company. (Gummesson 2002, 88.)

Even though customer complaint might be seen as an ultimate test for the organization, well handled it may enhance the company's reputation and image in the mind of a tourist. From a complaint company can find out what the error is and fix it, as well as learn about customers' needs and consequently accordingly modify and correct actions taken (Peppers & Rogers 2011, 212). Complaint may also increase loyalty, according to Goodman, up to 60% (2009,30) and according to Kotler and Keller (2009, 169) from 54%-70%. Yet for this to occur, customer should be able to easily reach a company representative, the problem should be handled, as quickly as possible and accurate compensation should be offered. Kotler and Keller argue that if the problem is solved quickly, the repurchase rate is 95%. Resolved difficulty also affects word-of-mouth; on average 10-20 people tell about an unraveled problem while only five communicate a solved one (Gummesson 2002, 93). Researchers suggest that attitude of the staff responding to the problem strongly affect to the judgment of the client. The more caring response client perceives the more satisfied he would be. This method for minimizing overall dissatisfaction seems to apply whether or not the technical problem can be solved. (Laws 2004, 91; Swarbrooke & Horner 1999, 242-243) Peppers and Rogers (2011, 212) argue that seeking complaint is an effective method to raise customer loyalty. When questions about how company could better serve the customer are presented, an unsatisfied customer can be seen as an asset to the company. This is why it is vital to offer customers easily accessible platform to give feedback.

A service process is a situation where provider and customer interact, and where relationship between them can be built. Perceived relationship does not straight mean loyalty but is part of it. (Grönroos 2007, 8.) A loyal customer does not tend to switch brands or use competitors' products (Torres & Kline 2006, 291). Loyalty can be measured according to repurchases or intentions of them. Goodman (2009, 22) claims that continuous repurchases are often the most reliable scale for measuring loyalty, but that the expressed intentions to purchase are also relatively trustworthy. This applies especially to the negative actions. Keeping existing customers is believed to be more profitable than attracting new ones (for example Grönroos 2007, 8; Torres & Kline 2006, 291). Even though guest satisfaction does not mean loyalty (Gummesson 2002, 229; Torres & Kline 2006, 191) concepts are tightly connected. According to Peppers and Rogers the relationship between them is not linear but in general the more satisfied customer is the more likely he will remain loyal to the company. The outcome is that one will not only use company's services again but will also refer other customers to it. It is suggested that customer's willingness to recommend company to a friend can be linearly correlated to his own level of satisfaction. (2011, 336) As mentioned earlier in this Chapter, customers that have received a recommendation, tend to be more satisfied than others.

Peppers and Rogers (2011) argue that customer loyalty can be defined to be attitudinal or behavioral. According to the selected definition, the prescription varies. They suggest that the best approach is to simultaneously use both definitions. By attitudinal loyalty is meant that customer loyalty is built up to the customer state of mind. Liking the package, services, brand or products leads customer to prefer it. As it is actually customer's willingness to use company's services rather than being actual behavior, company should improve elements of customer experience. Behavioral loyalty is based on re-purchases. Liking the company is not concerned; customer may buy from variable reasons. May it be price, location or that the company is only service producer. It can also be described as *functional loyalty*. In addition to tactics mentioned in attitudinal loyalty, including legal contracts and severe price-cutting may increase behavioral loyalty. Behavioral loyalty is easy to measure while attitudinal requires polling or surveys. High scores in attitudinal aspect signals company having a good position against its competitors. If there is no behavioral loyalty however, financial benefit is weak. High scores in attitudinal may not mean repurchase, even though the company is "liked". Behavioral loyalty does not mean satisfaction. (64-65.) Problems damaging customer satisfaction also disobey loyalty. Goodman claims that 20% of the customers that face problems do not make repurchase but will switch brand (2009, 17).

### 3.3 The Kano Model

The Kano Model assists to expose service performance impact to customer satisfaction, by identifying attributes that stimulate customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. (Mikulić & Prebežac 2011, 46; thekanomodel.com Date of retrieval 10.1.2013.) It is the highest used model among marketing professionals, and changed the one-dimensional view of how customer needs and requirements affect on customer satisfaction (Ting & Ping 2010, 173). It was previously thought that customer satisfaction increases once customers needs come better fulfilled. Kano discovered that this was not absolute. He suggested that while the level of requirements varies, there are three main attributes which impact on customer satisfaction:

1. *Must-be Attributes*. Customers presume these attributes to be fulfilled. Lacking raises dissatisfaction, meeting the attributes will not raise satisfaction.
2. *One-Dimensional Attributes*. Can be called as expected needs, the satisfaction increases or decreases according to the fulfillment. Positively and linearly related to customer satisfaction, if the requirements are met the customer is satisfied and vice versa.
3. *Attractive Attributes*. Also called excitement needs. Fulfillment of unexpected need will raise satisfaction greatly. Lack of attractive attributes will not affect customer satisfaction, as customers do not expect the fulfillment. (Ting & Ping 2010 174-175; Jonsson, Kvist & Klefsjö, 2006, 526.)

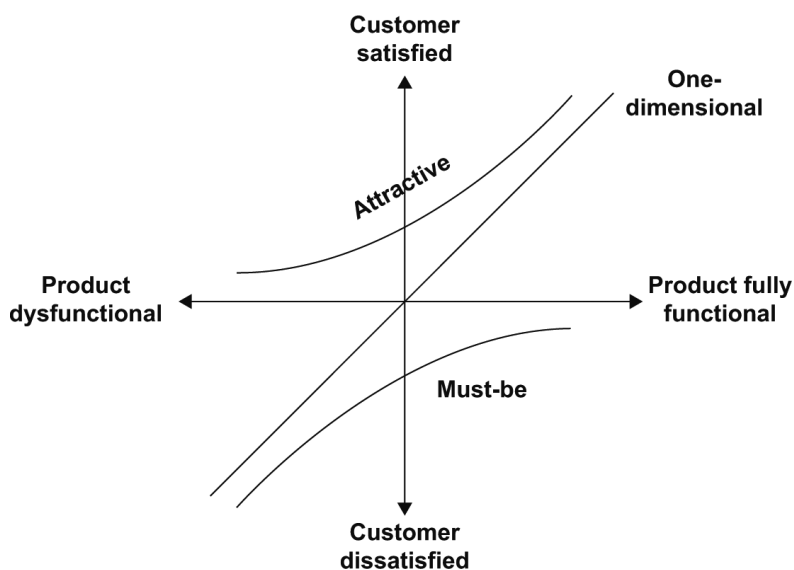


FIGURE 5. The Kano Model (Ting & Ping 2010, 175.)

Kano represented three relationship curves in a diagram (can be seen in figure 3), where horizontal axis indicates the level of fulfillment of requirements of a certain service, and the vertical axis the level of satisfaction. Must-be attributes are always left unspoken, as the client expects the fulfillment. One-dimensional attributes are expected and spoken out while attractive attributes are unexpected and unspoken. For a service organization it is vital to recognize and fulfill unspoken needs. Companies that succeed in it are likely to have very satisfied or delighted customers. (Jonsson Kvist & Klefsjö, 2006, 527; Pesonen 2007, 40.)

In addition to the previous classification, Kano also identified three supporting categories for customer requirements, *indifferent*, *reverse* and *questionable*. *Indifferent* indicates the client being indifferent to the requirement, meaning that the particular service will not increase nor decrease satisfaction. *Reverse* presents clients' dislike towards the requirement, the absence of the element actually raises satisfaction. *Questionable* indicates contradiction in clients answer. Classifying service quality attributes according to their influence to customer satisfaction provides guidance for companies making tactical and strategic decisions concerning customer satisfaction. (Chen, Chang, Hsu & Yang 2011, 386-410; Ting & Ping 2010, 174.)

### 3.4 Measuring customer satisfaction

It is crucial to recognize what customers actually want, need and require in order being able to satisfy them. There are multiple ways of measuring customer satisfaction:

1. *Spontaneous customer feedback*. Ubiquitous means for comments; words, facial expressions and acts can all be a form for feedback. Collecting data requires observation.
2. *Request for feedback*. Interviews, audits and questionnaires are common methods in collecting customer satisfaction data.
3. *Self-evaluation*. May be carried out in daily basis or for example once a month. Rational thinking after service situation may be a good method in understanding possible drawbacks.
4. *Statistics*. Including re-purchases, customer- and customer feedback volume, reclamations, growth in sales and market share. (Pesonen 2007, 43-47.)

Methods listed above enable investigation of customer perception of satisfaction. Techniques collecting similar data are infinite. It is highly recommended to use multiple methods simultaneously. The main object for company is however, to carefully *analyze* collected information and *make improvements accordingly*. (Pesonen 2007, 42,47.) Measuring is difficult as satisfaction results from different reasons. Even if two customers share the same level of satisfaction, it does not mean that it has the same motive. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 166.)

According to Kenett & Salini (4, 2011) customer satisfaction may be observed indirectly on the contrary to variables including revenue, service purchased or geographical location. These unobserved variables may also be called *latent* variables. For concluding a successful customer satisfaction examination it is important to find adequate attributes that are typical for product or service in question. As latent variables cannot be used in surveys, a set of substituting observed variables need to be selected.

There are several models to describe customer satisfaction. In *composition* or *formative models* satisfaction is compiled from multidimensional attributes. Each component describes an aspect of a service that is considered to be essential in terms to define customer satisfaction. The combinations of findings from every attribute are defining. One of well-known composition model is SERVQUAL (Chapter 2.5). In regression models customer satisfaction is often expressed by using nominal or ordinal scale. In ordinary linear model precise features of a service are explained by using variables including for example age- or suitability of equipment. The output data can be conveyed on conventionally ordered rating scales. It may though refer to customers' personal data that is measured on metric scale. Logistic regression model may be utilized if response to overall satisfaction can be predicted, these values can be presented on ordinal scale. Linear structural models with latent variables provide links between conceptual constructs of customer satisfaction. The model includes structural equations and measurement model. Models are used to calculate customer satisfaction indexes and even though variables are measured on ordinal scales they may be transferred to metric scale. (Kenett & Salini 13-15, 2011.)

## **4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research questions based on the theoretical background and knowledge about the commissioner companies were set to reveal specific customer group's satisfaction level and attitudes towards service quality in Iso-Syöte. The answers were anticipated to help the entrepreneurs to understand this particular group's desires, and may then be used to enhance the service quality and customer satisfaction accordingly, finally leading to increased visitor volume in the long run.

### **4.1 Case-study**

A case study is a detailed examination of a group, where the examiners role may be participating or outside observing. Case studies time frame is most often limited, beginning from one hour and rarely lasting longer than one year. It is possible for the researcher to take a role varying from very distant to intimate. In this study, researchers position is in between those two extremes. A procedure of a case study may vary from a very specifically planned schema to an observatory study without expectations. The lastly mentioned can be used to identify groups' beliefs, values and behaviour. In this research the preconceived structure is used in order to get answers to precise questions. Case study may be flexibly used in varied contexts. The conducting researcher may however affect the study; hence a version of a different investigator might appear dissimilar (Thomas & Brubaker 2008, 114, 118-120, 122).

A case study was chosen to this thesis as it suits small-scale researcher in terms of being focused on minor amount of people. The Crystal customer group was chosen, as there was no previous study made about international tourists perception about service quality in Iso-Syöte. The researcher has individual interest towards Iso-Syöte after multiple years of working in the area, as well as interest towards international business.

## 4.2 Quantitative and qualitative research methods

Quantitative research is said to be collecting and analysing data presented in a numeric form. It usually emphasises large amounts of statistics and has even been referred as “gathering of facts”, this suggestion being criticized however. Usage of questionnaire might often be seen as a quantitative method, even though it often contains open-ended responses, which allow in-depth study of individual cases. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001, 64.) Qualitative research is much more detailed than quantitative, as the data is seldom pre-categorized and generalising it is complex. Thus it helps us to understand *why*, and so assists to understand the results gained from quantitative study. (Trochim 2006, accessed 20.1.2013.)

Aim of a direct-data survey is to investigate a certain phenomenon within an identified group of people. Conducting survey requires multiple steps that often include defining the focus according to research questions, identifying the group surveyed, selecting the most suitable instruments and methods for data collection, choosing a sample group and piloting the study, collecting and classifying the data and finally interpreting and describing the findings in relation to original research problem. (Thomas & Brubaker 2008, 127-128.)

In Questionnaires the questions may be designed to be unbiased and to produce results that apply to the whole sample. Often questionnaires may be broken down and replicated in the future. Data may prove to be difficult to link to the theory however. Often results only illustrate a particular point of time, rather than an on going process. The correct understanding of the respondents might be difficult to prove, which raises issues in truthfulness and accuracy. The survey may often be valid in breadth rather than depth. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001, 79.)

In this thesis there are two separated surveys: the Ski School survey and the Hotel& Safaris-survey. A probability sampling method was used as constructing a complete list of population elements would have been impossible for the researcher and because the customers were concentrated in natural clusters. Clusters were on two levels, one week group forming one and ski school customers forming a sub-cluster in it. Less than half of the Crystal customers that visited Iso-Syöte belonged to studied sample of the Hotel & Safaries while most of the ski school customers were studied. Reason to that was the large population compared to resources. In researchers opinion this method worked rather well for it purpose. (Rönkkö 2012.)

Sampling offers a possibility to see the dominant characteristic of a group as well as differences among group members. Conclusion may often be applied to a larger population, thereby contributing to readers understanding. Questionnaires enable large respondent volume in limited time scale with relatively little effort. (Thomas & Brubaker 2008, 133.) Detailed questionnaire may not reveal true opinions of diligent participants however. It may be challenging to gather convincing rationale to support the findings beyond studied sample.

After collecting and analysing the results the next concentration could be the improvement in wider perspective in which qualitative method could be used. A relatively short period of time and lack of resources, as well as familiarity with method, access to situations and subject of study also affected the selection of research method.

#### **4.3 Questionnaires**

The questions in the two separate questionnaires were augmented from the subjects discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. In forming the actual survey papers, questions were organized in groups by separating customer experiences. The researcher considered this to be the most logical order for the customer. Thus under every headline expected and perceived service quality, both technical and functional, has been questioned upon. Similarly customer satisfaction has been questioned. The questions were taken from the issues that were considered important by the authors of the theoretical foundation used in this study. Commissioners also had a possibility to influence to the survey questions.

Using five-scale answering seemed to give better results than only having three. With five options it is possible to see what was the satisfaction or dissatisfaction level, rather than just revealing positive or negative opinion. Open-ended questions were used to give the clients a chance to emphasize issues that they find important.

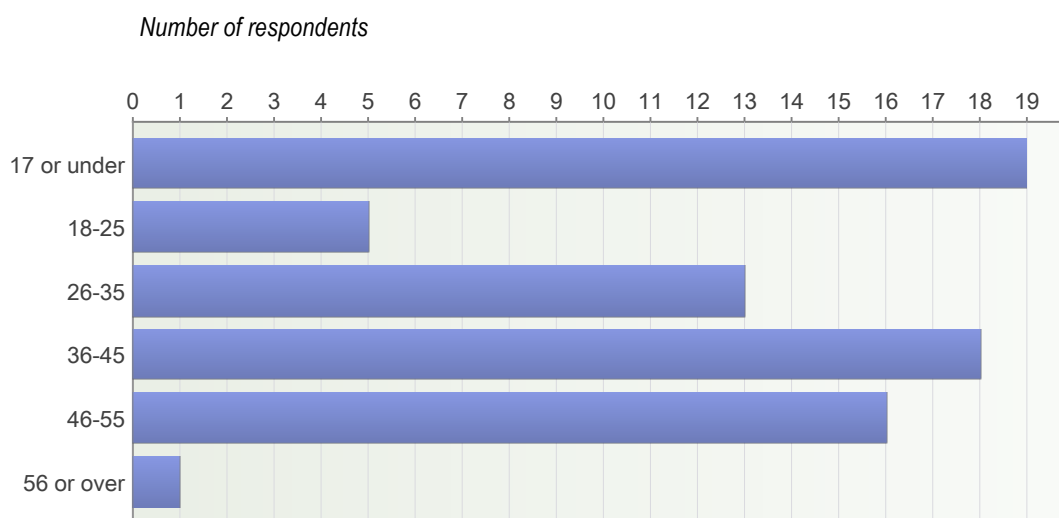


## 5 RESEARCH RESULTS

The research was implemented by using two questionnaires considering the ski school and the hotel and safari services in Iso-Syöte (APPENDIX 4 & 5). Data was collected in the resort during ski season 2012-2013. Rating scale from satisfied to dissatisfied was used so that score from satisfied was one and from dissatisfied was five.

### 5.1 Ski School

Ski School survey was collected 10.1. -21.3.2013, it was dealt out to every customer (excluding small children) after ski school, or on their last day of a multiple day course. Respondents returned the questionnaires to ski school counter or up to their tour guide. Altogether 72 customers responded to the survey. From all respondents over a quarter were 17 years old or younger, 25 % were 36-45 years old. A little over 1 % of respondents were 56 or older, *FIGURE 6*.



*FIGURE 6. Number of respondents divided by age groups (n=72)*

42 of the respondents were travelling with their family (58 %), 23 with their partner (32 %) and 8 with friends (11 %). Four of the respondents had been Iso-Syöte ski schools customers before (n=72). Nearly 60 % had had ski school lessons elsewhere (n=72). Virtually everyone had

purchased lessons prior to arrival, two respondents while on holiday. Respondents that had purchased their ski school in advance, were instructed not to answer however there were still 21 responses to question six, "Reservation" and 24 respondents to question seven, "From where did you purchase your lessons?" In question six there was 100% satisfaction to both ski school availability (n=21) and easiness of making reservation (n=21). In question seven 13 people answered that they purchased lessons through Crystal guide (54%), ten from elsewhere (42%) and one from hotel reception (4%). No one had purchased lessons straight from ski school counter. Respondents that answered that they purchased lessons from elsewhere were asked to specify their answer. Five respondents had ski school on their initial booking, three from Thompson and two from Crystal.

72 respondents answered to question that concerned satisfaction towards ski school, *TABLE 1*. Greeting, informing schedule changes, staff anticipation and price-quality ratio gained 97% overall satisfaction level.

*TABLE 1. Satisfaction to ski school*

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Receiving a warm greeting upon arrival (n=72)	70	2	-	-	-	1,03
Informing possible schedule changes (please answer only if there were changes) (n=45)	44	1	-	-	-	1,02
Staff anticipating special requests/ needs (n=72)	71	1	-	-	-	1,01
Price-quality ratio (n=72)	69	3	-	-	-	1,04
Total (n=261)	254	7	-	-	-	1,03

Respondents gave feedback of their own instructor to record the satisfaction from lessons. (APPENDIX 2.) 100 % of the respondents were satisfied to instructors' appearance and language skills. Part needing improvement the most was *feedback after the lesson/ follow-up information*, from 71 respondents 63 were *satisfied*, five *somewhat satisfied* and three *neutral*.

According to the results the respondents did not experience any problems while in ski school (n=71). 58 customers would *definitely* use ski school services again, equalling 82 % of the respondents (n=71), nine would *probably* use (22 %) and four were *unsure* (6 %). There were no respondents who would *not* or would *probably not* use again. From 69 customers, 61 (88 %) would definitely recommend ski school to others, while eight (12 %) would probably recommend.

When suggestions to improve ski school operations were questioned, from 39 answers 15 were actually improvement suggestions. Two respondents requested lessons that would not clash with other activities available, two would have liked guidance with the equipment when checking in, two would like to see families and couples lessons arranged simultaneously. In other comments beginners starting their lessons in Monday morning (rather than afternoon), helmets included to rental package, more feedback on skiing skills and a card to see improvements and things to still achieve were suggested. Some comments:

*"More practising on the flat before attempting button lift. Possible more "well done"s & "congratulations"- to build confidence."*

*"Heidi was excellent! All of the students stayed at the Iso-Syöte Hotel. The first bus from the hotel arrives at the slopes after 10.30 so lessons should start slightly later so guests who cannot ski down can make the start of the lesson."*

*"More regular transport between slope's & hotels. Would also like to say thank you to Dan Hopkins for his patience while teaching our daughter, and making it fun for her."*

*"Challenges on the last day, ie. quickest time trial on run, accuracy of turns, obstacle course i.e. of piste."*

Other feedback given included in eleven comments "thank you/thanks", in eight "excellent", in five "perfect" and "very satisfied", in three "friendly", "helpful" and "excellent instructor" and in two "wonderful" and "relaxed". Some examples of further comments:

*"Fantastic ski school. Very relaxed and friendly . Sophie had a wonderful time and adores skiing & her smiley instructor! Kiitos."*

*"I couldn't improve the service I received . I hope to see Heidi again next year for more fun. Very satisfied"*

*"Nothing to improve. Heidi+ Veikko were both extremely patient + friendly. We will be coming back next year + I hope to see them again then. I found my ski legs + they gave me confidence to succeed. Thank you to all of you we had a great holiday"*

*"Veikko was extremely friendly, kind and helpful. I couldn't fault him at all. We were all so impressed with the quality of the teaching here at Iso-syöte. Thank you Veikko :)"*

*"Very difficult to improve, excellent instructor and service. Thank you, beginner to parallel in 3 days excellent!"*

## **5.2 Hotel & Safaris**

The Hotel & Safaris questionnaire was dealt to target group members 3. -23.2.2013. They received the survey on their last day, while on a bus to the airport. Crystal tour guide Katarina Hanzalikova, who also collected the forms dealt it out. Customers had approximately two hours to fill in the questionnaires. The goal was to deal *at least* one survey per travel party, being it a family, a group of friends or a couple. There were altogether 88 survey papers returned. In the processed replies below  $n = x$  illustrates the answerer volume in each question. Figures and tables are used to clarify results.

Three questions were about demographics. 84 respondents filled in their gender, which equalled 45 females and 39 males. Nearly half of the respondents were 36-55 years old, while only 13% were under 26 years of age (*FIGURE 7*).

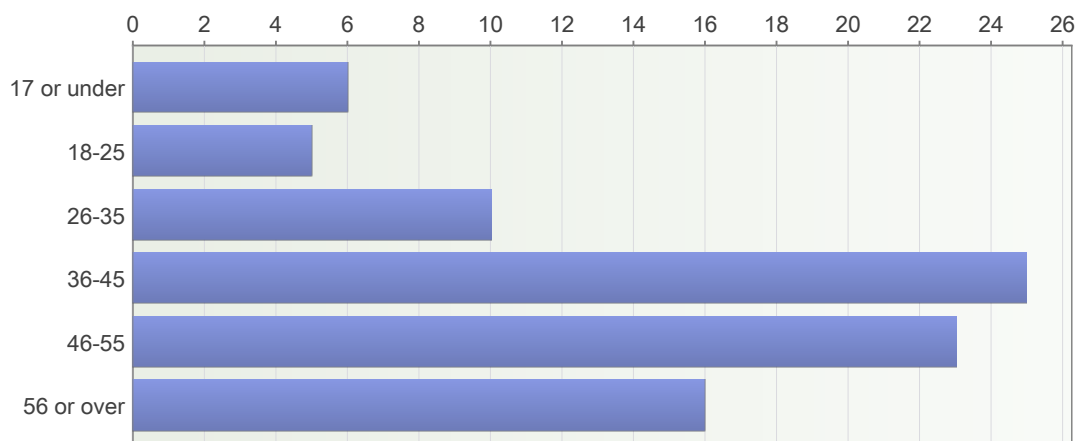


FIGURE 7. Number of respondents belonging to each age group (n=85)

Nearly 50 % of the respondents were travelling with their partner and over 40 % with their family. 20 of 56 children reported, were ten years old or younger. 27 were 11 to 17 years old and nine were 18 or older. 8 % were travelling with their friends and only one person was travelling alone. 87 % of the respondents answered to the question. Seven respondents had been in Iso-Syöte before, 78 were there for the first time (n=85).

Nearly everybody, 87 respondents answered to question “Why did you choose Iso-Syöte as your destination?” By 21 cites, the most often mentioned reason were *the Northern Lights*, followed by *activities*, 13 notes. Nine respondents mentioned the word “looked”, followed by words including *good*, *beautiful*, *lovely*. *Snow* was mentioned 15 times (also when included in, for example snowboarding), *cabin* nine times; *Finland and skiing* seven times; *location* six times, *recommend(ed)* five times; *price*, *scenery*, *quiet*, *beginners* and *brochure* four times, *honeymoon*, *husky*, *reviews* and *slopes* three times. Some words occurred together in multiple answers, including *winter*, *beginners* and *skiing*; *honeymoon*, *recommended*, *location*, *price*, *cabins* and *reviews*; *scenery*, *quiet*, *beautiful* and *slopes*; *husky*, *cabin* and *northern lights*; *Finland*, *brochure* and *snowboarding*.

After background questions, respondents were asked to give opinion about the accommodation. Respondents were divided nearly 50/50 between two accommodation options, 44 stayed in the cabins and 43 in the hotel (n=87).

Satisfaction towards accommodation was measured on five-scale measuring from dissatisfied to satisfied. Mean has been calculated so that 1 is the best score while 5 is the lowest. Over 85 % of respondents were satisfied with *accommodation appearance* and nearly 80 % with *cleanliness*, all the other aspects graded scored over 60 % satisfaction **except** for *technology available*. It acquired 27 % satisfaction, 40 % were somewhat satisfied, 20 % neutral, 10% somewhat dissatisfied and 3% dissatisfied. From appearance and attention to sustainability every respondent gave neutral or higher score. (TABLE 2.)

TABLE 2. Satisfaction towards accommodation (n=88)

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Appearance (n=88)	76	11	1	-	-	1,15
Cleanliness (n=88)	70	15	1	1	1	1,27
Technology available (internet and cable television) (n=86)	23	35	17	9	2	2,21
Attention to sustainability (n=87)	54	19	14	-	-	1,54
Attention to safety (door locks and emergency exits) (n=88)	61	16	6	2	3	1,52
Was the room comfortable? (n=88)	58	27	1	2	-	1,4
Did the accommodation fulfil your expectations? (n=88)	63	20	2	3	-	1,38
Total (n=613)	405	143	42	17	6	1,5

When suggestions to improve accommodation were inquired, *internet/Wi-Fi* was mentioned 21 times. *Double bed* was clearly the most mentioned improvement requirement after that, by 16

respondents. *Towels* were mentioned in eight cases, most suggesting chance of towels free of charge.

One question cluster was about restaurant services. *Staff appearance* and *friendliness* both scored nearly 90 % satisfaction and over 95 % when somewhat satisfied was also taken account. *Variety-* and *quality of food*, as well as *late night program/bands* got any opinions lower than neutral. For the first two, around half of the people were satisfied, over 10 % dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. A little over 50 % were neutral with the lastly mentioned; over 24 % were on the negative side and over 21 % on the positive side of that. (TABLE 3.)



TABLE 3. Satisfaction towards restaurant services (n=87)

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Appearance of the premises (n=87)	71	11	5	-	-	1,24
Staff appearance (n=87)	78	8	1	-	-	1,1
Staff professionalism (n=87)	74	11	2	-	-	1,17
Staff language skills (n=87)	70	16	1	-	-	1,21
Staff friendliness (n=87)	77	7	3	-	-	1,15
Staff enthusiasm to anticipate special requests (n=82)	62	12	8	-	-	1,34
Variety of food (n=87)	43	27	6	8	3	1,86
Quality of food (n=86)	48	26	3	7	2	1,71
Late night program/bands (n=65)	10	4	35	9	7	2,98
Total (n=755)	553	122	64	24	12	1,53

A little over 40 % of the respondents found that there was dish(es) missing from the restaurant's selection. 31 of them specified their answer; *dessert/pudding* was mentioned 10 times, mainly requiring better selection. *Eggs* were mentioned five times; fried, warm & soft boiled and scrambled were all mentioned at least twice. Greater choice of *cereal*, *yoghurt* and *cooked tomatoes* on breakfast were mentioned as well as *cheese* and *biscuits*. An open field to give improvement suggestions about restaurant services was provided. *More variety* was mentioned five times, *better vegetables* four times, *drinks* were hoped to be served to the tables instead of picking them up from the bar (four feedbacks), *the drink prices* were also claimed to be too high. *Toaster* was unsatisfactory according to four replies. *Vegetarian food* got good feedback overall, but one respondent would have liked to see it on table, without having to request for it. A few commented on the *temperature of the food*, according to them it should have been hotter. Three persons thought that the restaurant *closed too early* at night. *Sauce* was requested to be on side rather than on top of meat/fish by two people. *More than three respondents mentioned dessert variety here again.* (n=55).

Next part of the questionnaire was about activities. The most popular activity was downhill skiing/snowboarding (82 % of the respondents), followed by snow mobile safari (76 %) and husky sledding (65 %). Less than 7 % of the respondents visited Santa Claus Village at the Arctic Circle (Santa's secret cottage) & Ranua Zoo and a little over 11 % tried cross country skiing. (FIGURE 8.)

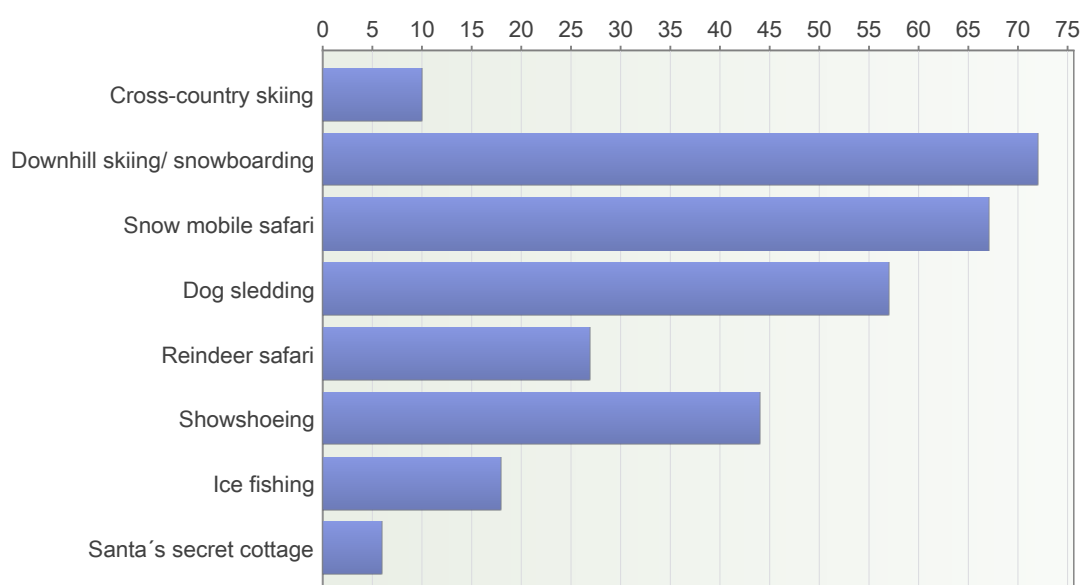


FIGURE 8. Number of participants in activities (n=88)

When respondents' favourite activity was questioned (n= 79) the most liked activity was snowmobiling (n=25), second was husky safari (n=23) and third was skiing/snowboarding (n=16). Reindeer safari was rated to be the best activity by six-, snowshoeing, cross country skiing and ice rallying by two- and ice fishing by one person. Nine people had no favourite or liked all equally (n= 86).

Respondents were also asked to justify their answers. 64 % gave an explanation why snowmobiling was their favourite, from 16 comments *guide* and *fun* were mentioned seven times. Three times it was specified that night-time safari was favourite. Below some comments:

*"Snowmobile because i like speed"*

*"Snow mobile- it is exhilarating + children enjoy it."*

*"Night time snowmobile was fun, guides were nice, lovely scenery"*

*"Snow mobiling. Our guide told us myths + stories. But both were brilliant."*

*"Snowmobiling safari at night, very exiting. Good mix of driving and bonfire conversation led by young man on thu. 22nd. feb."*

*"Latenight snowmobile safari. It was good fun & our guides were very knowledgeable & fun."*

48 % of respondents that choose husky safari to their favourite activity gave a reason to selection; from 11 answers *scenery/place* was mentioned four times, *guide*, *experience* and *dogs* were mentioned three times. Some of the comments:

*"Dog sledding because of the novelty and the dogs were lovely."*

*"Husky safari- one of the reason choosing iso-syote as a destination."*

*"Husky dog sledding, beautiful dogs/ scenery and interesting guide"*

*"Dog sledding. Completely new experience and nice way to take in the scenery."*

*"Husky- a great wilderness trip - very 'hands on'!"*

From 16 answerers that selected downhill skiing or snowboarding to their favourite activity nearly 70 % gave reason to selection. Ski school was mentioned four times, quietness of the slopes and skiing being the main purpose of the trip were mentioned three times (n=11). Some of the comments below:

*"Skiing good and quiet slopes during week"*

*"Downhill skiing lessons- good instruction + we both improved a lot on our previous skiing"*

*"Ski school, great instructors!"*

Some comments from other activities being selected favourite:

*"Snowshoeing- gorgeous landscape!"*

*"Ice fishing- Because the guide explained the dangers of being on ice and general survival in the cold."*

*"Reindeer sleigh. Owner very friendly & interesting. Able to help with reindeer."*

*"Reindeer safari Hands on nature of trip Knowledge & friendliness of guide"*

*"Reindeer safari. Gentle & no concentration needed"*

*"Rally driving! Mad!"*

*"All of them really enjoyed them"*

*"Hard to say all very good"*

Over 87 % of the respondents were satisfied, and nearly 12 somewhat satisfied with the activity availability, nearly 98 % to the selection of activities. 87 people answered to the question. Over 75 % of 69 respondents that answered to question 14, said that there was no particular activities missing from the selection. 17 people thought that there was some activity missing, they suggested that *ice-skating* (three mentions), *tubing* (three) and *hunting* (two) should be available. Some examples of other suggestions:

*“More activities on Sunday please”*

*“More activities need to be arranged for afternoons, as we could not do some we wanted to do as the clashed with ski lessons”*

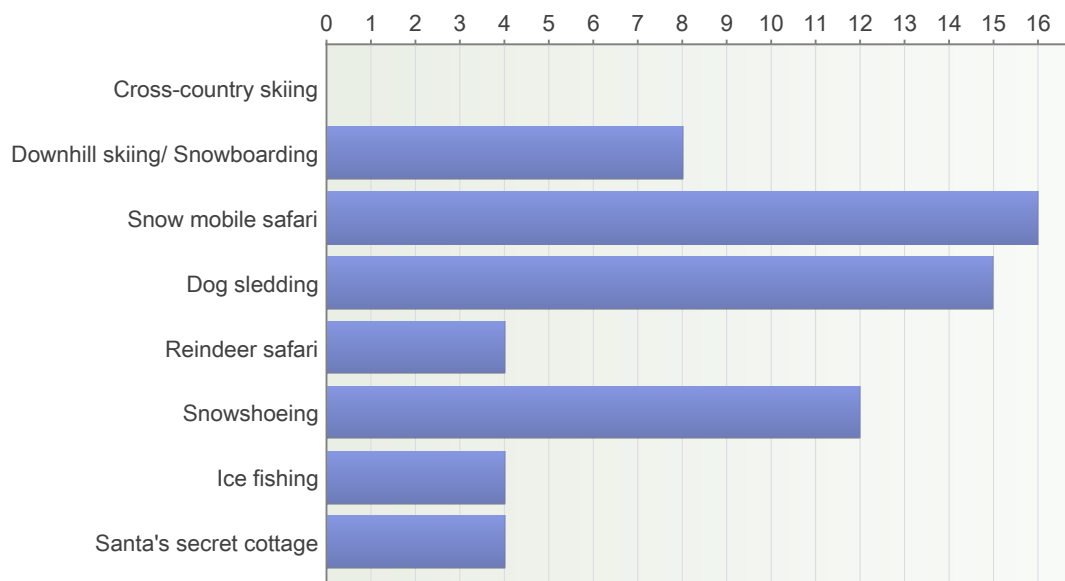
*“Do not want to see Santa when not christmas. Chance to learn more about Finnish life, traditions, history.”*

*“Local town trip? “*

*“faster reideer just old fashion available”*

*“Secret st. change for ranua zoo”*

Snow mobile safari scored the highest response of over 25 %, when respondents' least favourite activity was questioned (*FIGURE 9*). It equals 16 respondents; one of them further explained the reason being that they did not see the Northern Lights. Dog sledding was chosen to be least favourite by 15 respondents and snowshoeing by 12. Reindeer safari, Santa's secret cottage and ice fishing all got 4 answers. No one selected cross-country skiing as least favourite.



*FIGURE 9. Number of least favourite-, or only activity (n=63)*

In *TABLE 4* the satisfaction means towards respondents least favourite activities have been compared, the closer the mean value is to number 1 the more satisfied the customers.

*TABLE 4. Satisfaction towards least favourite- or only activity*

	Downhill skiing/ snowboarding (n=7)	Snowmobile safari (n=16)	Dog sledding (n=15)	Reindeer safari (n=4)	Snow - shoeing (n=12)	Ice fishing (n=4)	Santa's secret cottage (n=4)	Total (n=62)
Content of the activity	1,86	1,31	1,6	2	1,83	1,25	3,5	1,91
Standard of the equipment	1,33	1	1,8	1,25	1,25	1,25	2,5	1,48
Attention to environmental issues	1,43	1,5	1,4	1,5	1,42	1,5	2,5	1,61
Guide service attitude	1,33 (n=6)	1,06	1,07 (n=14)	1	1,58	1	1,5	1,22 (n=60)
Guide language skills	1,17 (n=6)	1,06	1,13	1,25	1,5	1,25	1,5	1,27 (n=61)
Total	1,42	1,19	1,4	1,4	1,52	1,25	2,3	1,5

From seven respondents, four were satisfied with the content of downhill skiing/ snowboarding, no respondent was dissatisfied. Three quarters were satisfied to snowmobile safaris. From 15 respondents ten were satisfied and four neutral to the dog sledding. Santa's secret cottages overall satisfaction was lowest with 3,5 mean, followed by reindeer safari, mean 2. Standard of the equipment mean varied between 1 and 2,5. Snowmobiling received the best score with only satisfied responses. Two activities got over 1,33 mean: Dog sledding 1,8 with ten satisfied answers out of 15, and Santa's secret cottage 2,5. There was no dissatisfied- and two somewhat

dissatisfied opinions regarding attention paid towards environmental issues in activities. Nine respondents were neutral towards their least favourite activity's environmental issues. 51 of the respondents were either satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

61 respondents rated the attention to safety issues of their least favourite activity. From all replies only six were neutral or below, ten were somewhat satisfied, and the rest, 46 were satisfied. Downhill skiing/ snowboarding scored the poorest with mean of 2,29, equalling one dissatisfied-; one neutral- and three somewhat satisfied responses. It was followed by Santa's secret cottage with mean of 2,25 and dog sledding, 1,53. Snowmobile safari got the best rate with only satisfied responses while reindeer safari, snowshoeing and ice fishing all scored mean of 1,25.

Guide's service attitude in the least favourite activity was rated by 60 respondents, scoring an overall mean of 1,22. 52 of the respondents were satisfied to their guide's service attitude, reindeer safari and ice fishing both scored 1 mean, with only satisfied answers. Snowshoeing received the weakest mean, 1,58 with two respondents being somewhat dissatisfied, one somewhat satisfied and the rest, nine people, satisfied. One third of respondents that had selected downhill skiing/ snowboarding to their least favourite activity were somewhat satisfied and the rest, four people, were satisfied. Most of the respondents were satisfied about the guide's service attitude in snow mobiling and dog sledding.

Respondents rated guide professionalism rather high in their least favourite activities, the overall mean was 1,2: 51 of the respondents were satisfied, six somewhat satisfied and two neutral (n=60). Reindeer safari and ice fishing received only satisfied answers. Snowmobile safari (n=16), Dog sledding (n=15) and Santa's secret cottage (n=4) each only got one response that was lower than satisfied. Downhill skiing/ snowboarding (n=6) and snowshoeing both received two third satisfaction. 51 of 61 respondents were satisfied of guide language skills in their least favourite activity. There was only one person that was somewhat dissatisfied, two were neutral and seven somewhat satisfied.

Guide friendliness received overall 1,13 mean, 54 of the respondents were satisfied, five somewhat satisfied and two neutral (n=61). Snowshoeing scored the weakest, 1,33 mean, with one neutral and two somewhat satisfied answers on top of the satisfied ones (n=12). Rest of the activities received each one response lower than satisfied, **except** for reindeer safari and ice fishing that had only satisfied answers.

In *TABLE 5* is shown how well respondents felt that their least favourite activity fulfilled their expectations. Santa's secret cottage was clearly at the bottom with 4,25 mean (n=4). Most of the other activities scored mean +-2. Reindeer safari fulfilled expectations best with three satisfied- and one neutral response.

*TABLE 5. Did the activity fulfil your expectations (n=62)*

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Downhill skiing/ Snowboarding (n=7)	2	2	1	2	-	2,43
Snowmobile safari (n=16)	8	4	1	3	-	1,94
Dog sledding (n=15)	7	3	2	2	1	2,13
Reindeer safari (n=4)	3	-	1	-	-	1,5
Snowshoeing (n=12)	6	2	1	3	-	2,08
Ice fishing (n=4)	1	2	1	-	-	2
Santa's secret cottage (n=4)	-	1	1	-	2	4,25
Total (n=62)	27	14	8	10	3	2,33

To better understand least favourite activity selection criteria, further feedback that was given in open answers was studied;



1. Downhill skiing/ Snowboarding

- *"Just wish ski bus would run more regularly."*
- *"Was very annoyed that we had to pay €50 per person to hire ski helmets- Luosto gave as a part of hire package. Get better lift line in between 1+2 fitted on family slope as it is hard for snowboarders"*
- *"Shuttlebus times during the week. Chair lift."*

2. Snow mobile safari

- *"Snowmobile safari too many stops on journey out, this stopped it being quite as enjoyable as it could have been"*
- *"No northern lights, no bodies fault"*
- *"Snow mobile safari group was too big- maybe split into 2 groups, I for faster."*

3. Dog sledding

- *"I least enjoyed dog sledding because it wasnt what I was expected I was hoping to be able to ride the sledge to have had a experience at it."*
- *"Dog safari too short!"*
- *"husky dogs were too slow and kept stopping and we had to walk around"*

4. Reindeer safari

- *"Amazing Reindeer safari was just very cold"*

5. Santa's secret cottage

- *"Santa village was terrible!!"*
- *"The trip to santa's cottage was awful but the zoo was great."*

A little over 50 % of the respondents thought that they *learned facts about Finland*, 37 % *learned, but would like to have learned more*. Five respondents *did not learn* any facts, same amount, five people from 87 respondents *did not learn, but would have like to learn facts about Finland*.

Katarina Hanzalikova was the only Crystal guide throughout the season and nearly all, 87 respondents, answered to the question "Who was your guide?" All respondents (88) evaluated

her actions. She did not get any dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied answers and only a few “neutral” and “somewhat satisfied”. Nearly 96 % of all replies were “satisfied”, APPENDIX 3.

38 respondents replied to question, “How would you improve the guide services?” Only five respondents saw need for some improvements;

*“Improve her finnish language skills”*

*“better spoken English”*

*“Allow more questions & chat as initial meeting so guests meet each other.”*

*“Would have liked to have been informed when northern lights occurred.”*

*“More yeses and no excuses/ limitations.. also pay her more! :)”*

Most of the feedback was positive, a few examples;

*“ no improvement necesssary. She was very smiley+lovely”*

*“Katerina did a brilliant job”*

*“Unable to improve as was excellent. The best guide & a good ambassodor for Crystal. :)”*

*“Excellent guide- best tour operator guide we have ever met.”*

*“You cannot she was excellent Kiitos Katarina :)”*

Some of the questions were only targeted to people who did downhill skiing or snowboarding. 73 of 84 had tried at least other of the two sports. Satisfaction towards lifts and slopes was inquired. From the issues questioned, respondents were the most satisfied to lift operators’ service attitude, and least satisfied to the lifts themselves. Slopes did not get any dissatisfaction answers, TABLE 6.

TABLE 6. Satisfaction to slopes and lifts

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Slopes (n=77)	63	10	4	-	-	1,23
Lifts (n=76)	45	17	6	6	2	1,72
Lift operators service attitude (n=76)	64	10	2	-	-	1,18
Did the slopes fulfil your expectations (n=77)	62	12	3	-	-	1,23
Total (n=306)	234	49	15	6	2	1,34

Ratings of resort area in general can be seen in TABLE 7. The most satisfactory was the *attractiveness* with 87 % of satisfied and 12 % of somewhat satisfied replies, followed by the *amount of guests in the area* 85 % and 13 %. Third was *area fulfilling expectations*, scores 82 % and 15 %. Technology including Wi-Fi and ticketing system was noticeably at the bottom scoring 47 % from satisfaction and the highest number from somewhat dissatisfied and dissatisfied equalling 10%. Even though services scored 76% satisfied, it also had the second highest dissatisfaction; 5% somewhat dissatisfied. Altogether resort area scored 77% from satisfied, 17% from somewhat satisfied, 4% neutral, less than 2% somewhat dissatisfied and less than 1% dissatisfied.

TABLE 7. Satisfaction to resort area

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Services (n=86)	65	12	5	4	-	1,4
Attractiveness (n=86)	75	10	1	-	-	1,14
Cleanliness (n=86)	69	14	2	1	-	1,24
Technology (including Wi-Fi and ticketing system) (n=83)	39	26	10	6	2	1,88
Attention to safety issues (n=84)	66	13	4	-	1	1,3
The amount of guest in the area (was it too crowded) (n=85)	72	11	1	-	1	1,3
Did the area fulfill your expectations (n=85)	70	13	2	-	-	1,2
Did the climate conditions fulfill your expectations (n=85)	67	15	3	-	-	1,25
Total (n=680)	523	114	28	11	4	1,33

Lastly the overall holiday experience was studied. Respondents were asked if they faced any problems during their holiday. From 82 answerers 84 % replied “no”. From the 16 % that replied “yes”, everyone (13) specified their problem; three had had problems with *Internet connection*

(Wi-Fi), three with *lifts*, two with *lift passes*, two with their *bathrooms*, two with cabin *overbookings/downgrades*. There had also been problems with *door locks*, *booking* with Crystal and *TV signal*.

*"If you reported any problems, were you satisfied with the solution?"* from 15 respondents, ten were satisfied. From five that were not satisfied, only one gave further specification (her problem had been a downgrade to a smaller cottage);

*"Somewhat satisfied. Katarina tried her best to give reasonable refund and was very helpful + supportive"*

When questioning overall holiday satisfaction 80 people from 87 were satisfied or somewhat satisfied to the value for the price paid. 85 were satisfied to the resorts ability to provide relaxing atmosphere and 83 to the resort's ability to meet or exceed expectations.

From 86 respondents 71 would come back to Iso-Syöte. Of the 15 that would not come, eight respondents explained it by saying that they want to try different places. Below some other specifications;

*"Limited local attraction , though resort was good"*

*"Not for skiing, but would everything else"*

*"Because there are not enough slopes."*

*"Not sure there is much more to experience. Maybe if we had kids."*

*"It was a once in a lifetime experience"*

From 87 respondents 85 would recommend Iso-Syöte to others. Other from the two persons that would not recommend explained that the reason was limited local attraction. He had also stayed in Levi previously with more to do. Second person with "no"-answer said that he would or would not recommend, depending on their skiing ability.

From 80 answers, 15 respondents mentioned *scenery* and *snow*, four *landscape*, *environment*, *beauty* and *view* were also mentioned. *Atmosphere* was mentioned three times, *winter*

*wonderland* and *wilderness* both twice. *Slopes* were mentioned 10 times, most of the comments referring to the *quietness*. *Skiing* was mentioned nine times as well as *activities*. *Variety* of activities was mentioned four times. *People* were mentioned six times, adjectives included *few*, *Finnish*, *lovely* and *friendly*. *Cabins* were also mentioned six times, there was no specification why cabins however. Snowboarding was mentioned five times, in two replies *instructor* was mentioned. Friendly/friendliness were mentioned five times, variety four times, Helpful/ friendly staff was mentioned three times. Ski school/instructor/tuition were mentioned altogether six times. Six respondents claimed that everything was best in their holiday. Some comments below;

“great scenery, good skiing tuition+ friendly people”

“the scenery, friendly staff+ skiing out of the hotel door “

“Relaxed atmosphere with a chance to do as little or as much as you want.”

“The whole experience was magical. wonderful scenery. exciting activities. Loved it all.”

“Few people, great snow, great cabins.”

“the dogs on the dog sledding “

“everything, it was like being in heaven as I was really looking forward to a wooden lodge with a log fire and snow and I had everything I wanted”

“The cabins, the amount of snow. The winter wonderland. The people, ski school.”

“the culture, scenery”

“The peace in the wilderness”

“Finnish people, landscape, snow. HUTS”

“Being outside- seeing the landscape day and night.”

“Amazing landscape Great hiking Very quiet ski slopes”

“the beauty and activities, cabin relaxing atmosphere”

“Everything, it was more than I was expecting”

“Very remote and not too commercialised.”

“Lots of snow, cold and lots of activities and the food was good.”

"Variety. Snow conditions. But limited skiing for good or experienced skier."

"The winter wonderland magical. "

"Loved it all- even falling over whilst learning to ski :)"

"No crowds -Beautiful scenery -Lots of snow -Variety of activities"

"Area of Iso-Syöte"

"The snow, friendliness of staff & guests"

When respondents were given a chance for a further feedback, nearly 50 % or 42 respondents gave some. *Northern Lights* were mentioned six times, mostly about disappointment of not seeing them. A system to inform people when those can be seen was also suggested. Five requests for *chair lift*, one said that drag lift was difficult and one that lifts in general are difficult for boarders. Two people mentioned *Santa's Village* being horrible, *Ranua Zoo* was mentioned to be great. *Shuttle bus* timetables were hoped to be more regular and the fee cheaper, two people mentioned that the *snowmobile groups* were too big; one claimed that there were too many stops on the way out.

About the hotel; *massage* and *hot tubs*, as well as *warmer water* and *improvement to the sauna area* were requested by few people. Limited *comfortable seating* in the lounge area was seen as a problem by a couple of respondents. More *room for clothes* were hoped to the cabins by a couple of people. A few respondents mentioned limited *shopping opportunities*. There was also a variety of 100% positive feedback, some comments below:

*"Santa village was terrible!! accommodation needs to be cleaned more as was very dirty. ski bus should be more often midweek for beginner skiers"*

*"This is our 3rd. time in iso-syöte so we will return."*

*"Huskies are great! "*

*"Make breakfast later as it make me tired waking up by 8am"*

*"Great new fan the hotel room. Return flight to Gatwick very late particularly for people who have a long drive in England. The range of Finnish goods at reasonable prices to rate have as souvenir is VERY limited"*

*"Some more ski routes would be good."*

*"All activities clashed with ski school except huskey. Going to zoo on saturday meant we paid for a days skiing we could not use and we paid on sunday 250 euros extra Lift operator very helpful"*

*"Dog safari too short! It would have been nice to have been told we would not make first night meal! "*

*"Dissapointed. No northern lights. Ralk basic + limited choice for eating!! Good arctic clothing."*

*"Thank you for a nice holiday. We only wish we could have seen the northern lights but that was always a gamble! Art least the snowboarding was great. Well groomed runs & maintaied lifts, & nice lift operators :) Other tourist never took the opportunity to turn lights of and look for Northern Lights, which we may have seen a glimpse of.. with cameras flashing etc. we never stood a chance of enjoying the wilderness for even a second. Guides could have encouraged this. Some stars were out but we struggled to enjoy them."*

*"Dissapointed not to see NOrthern Lights. Chose this week after reading an article which said it would be good time. "*

*"Dont change anything ;)"*

In Chapters 2 and 3 differences of re-visiting- and new guests were discussed. In the following sector results of old customers have been examined and figures between two customer groups have been compared.

From 85 respondents seven had been Iso-Syöte's customer before, six of them stayed in the cabin- and one in the hotel accommodation. They gave the following reasons to choosing Iso-Syöte as their destination (n=5):

*"Liked the cabin x zye snow x enjoyed dog sledding"*

*"Quiet location, very scenic, good ski facilities"*

*"Been before"*

*"Not too commercialized Quiet"*

*"Good value, beautiful scenery, friendly staff & quiet ski slopes"*



Seven re-visiting customers were all satisfied to accommodation appearance, cleanliness, room comfortability and accommodation fulfilling expectations. Overall satisfaction mean was 1,41 while the same score for new customers was 1,51. (TABLE 8.)

TABLE 8. Satisfaction means of first timer- and re-visitors

Question group means		
	Customers that had been in Iso-Syöte previously (n=7)	Customers that were in Iso-Syöte for the first time (n=81)
Satisfaction to accommodation	1,41 (n=7)	1,51 (n=76-78)
Satisfaction to restaurant services	1,7 (n=6)	1,53 (n=57-88)
Satisfaction to guide	1,11 (n=7)	1,05 (n=76-78)
Satisfaction to slopes and lifts	1,18 (n=7)	1,38 (n=66-67)
Satisfaction to resort area	1,41 (n=7)	1,33 (n=73-76)
Overall holiday rating	1,19 (n=7)	1,31 (n=76-77)
Average mean	1,33	1,35

In *TABLE 8* first time guests and re-visitors mean satisfaction to different areas of the services are compared. Guests that had been in Iso-Syöte before were generally more satisfied to the *accommodation, slopes & lifts* and *overall holiday experience*, while first time visitors were more satisfied to *restaurant services, guide* and *resort area*. Average mean was nearly the same, having 0,02 difference.

Every respondent would both come again and recommend the resort for others. In seven open answer fields the overall response rate was 85 %.

From seven respondents four gave an improvement idea, three suggested internet access, two hot tub, washing machine was also suggested. One responder thought that cabin windows should be able to open in case of fire.

The new customers were altogether a bit more satisfied to the restaurant services than the returning customers. The lastly mentioned gave better scores to staff language skills, staff friendliness and the quality of food. Re-visiting customers gave the following suggestions to improve the restaurant services:

*"Gook nice food"*

*"Waiter coming to our table to take drink order rather than customers going to bar."*

*"Bar staff taking drink orders from table rather than us going up to the bar."*

*"more selection"*

*"Like to have the same table every night- reservation of tables"*

From seven re-visiting customers, one did cross-country skiing, two snow mobile safari, snowshoeing and ice fishing, three dog sledding, everybody (seven) did downhill skiing/snowboarding. All seven respondents were satisfied to both activity availability and selection of activities. Dog sledding, snowboarding and snowmobile safari were mentioned as favourite activity.

Four re-visitors selected their least favourite activity; two answered downhill skiing/snowboarding, two ice fishing. From content of the activity, standard of equipment, attention to safety issues, attention to environmental issues, service attitude-, professionalism-, language skills-, and friendliness of the guide and from activity fulfilling expectations re-visitors overall mean was 1,17 and first time visitors 1,32. None of the seven returning customers experienced problems during their holiday. The overall rate mean from value for the price paid, resort's ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere and meet or exceed expectations was 1,19 compared to first time visitors rate of 1,64. All seven respondents would both, come to Iso-Syöte again and recommend it to others. Quietness, cabins, snowboarding, relaxed atmosphere, scenery, quiet ski runs and the peace in the wilderness were some of the things that were mentioned as best liked aspects of the holiday by the returning customers. They also gave following further feedback:

*"improve food x wine also provide better shopping service for"*

*"Just wish ski bus would run more regularly."*

*"This is our 3rd. time in iso-syöte so we will return."*

*"Was very annoyed that we had to pay €50 per person to hire ski helmets- Luosto gave as a part of hire package. Last time we were here our guide was very interesting on snow shoe walk. Get better lift line in between 1+2 fitted on family slope as it is hard for snowboarders"*

*"Make breakfast later as it make me tired waking up by 8am"*

*"Lovely resort with warm and welcoming people, I will come back!"*

In the theoretical part of this work, idea of customers that have received a recommendation would be more satisfied to the service than others, was introduced (Chapters 2 & 3) Below nine respondents surveys, that mentioned recommendations as a reason for choosing Iso-Syöte as a destination, are studied closer.

Four customers said that the reason they selected Iso-Syöte as their destination was because of a recommendation of a friend/a travel agent/ family. Three guests mentioned good customer reviews, two declared the reason being good reviews in *trip advisor* web site.

In *TABLE 9* satisfaction between the guests that had received a recommendation and all respondents have been compared. The ratings are rather close in every question cluster mean and the total has only 0,01 difference.

*TABLE 9. Comparison between all respondents and respondents that have received a recommendation*

	Customers that have received a recommendation mean (n=9)	Overall mean (n=88)
Satisfaction to accommodation	1,46	1,5
Satisfaction to restaurant services	1,62	1,53
Satisfaction to activity selection and availability	1	1,09
Satisfaction to Crystal guide	1	1,05
Satisfaction to resort area	1,52	1,34
The value for the price paid	1,33	1,41
Resort's ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere	1,22	1,15
Resort's ability to meet or exceed your expectations	1,22	1,31
Total	1,3	1,29

Every guest that reasoned choosing Iso-Syöte as their destination because of a recommendation, would both, come again and recommend the resort for others. When asked for further feedback, only one gave an improvement idea (working Wi-Fi). The following answers were given when best thing about holiday experience was questioned:

*"The whole experience was magical. wonderful scenery. exciting activities. Loved it all."*

*"Everything :)"*

*"Friendliness of everyone. Easy access to the slopes."*

*"Quality of skiing"*

*"the snow+ cabins "*

*"Area of Iso-Syöte "*

*"Snowboarding "*

In the following section three most mentioned reasons for selecting Iso-Syöte as a travel destination has been further studied in order to find out how the selection criteria has influenced their satisfaction. 21 customers mentioned *the Northern Lights*, 13 *activities* and nine the word *"looked"* when explaining why they choose to come to Iso-Syöte.

From 21 respondents that mentioned *the Northern Lights* in their criteria of selecting the destination, 70% were females, 48% were travelling with their partner, over 80% of them stayed in the hotel and not one of them had been in Iso-Syöte before. Over 70% participated in snow mobile safari and dog sledding, and over 85% to downhill skiing/ snowboarding. *Attractiveness of the resort* and area fulfilling their expectations both received a mean of 1,26, being both higher than the averages of 1,14 and 1,2. *Climate conditions fulfilling their expectations* received 1,32 mean with over 70% satisfied, this being a bit higher than the overall mean 1,25(Chapter 5, 54). 45% of the respondents were satisfied to the value for the price paid, mean 1,6, again higher than the overall of 1,41. 57% were satisfied to resorts ability to meet or exceed expectations, outstandingly lower than the average of 74%. Every respondent would recommend the resort for others but 30% of them would not come back again. Four people mentioned the northern lights in the further feedback part.

13 respondents mentioned activities as a reason for selecting their destination, 55% of them were males, the biggest age group was 56 or older with 46% followed by 36-45 years old with 31%. 54% of the respondents were travelling with their partner. All the respondents were in Iso-Syöte for the first time, 62% of them stayed in the hotel. Snow mobile safari and dog sledding got both over 92% participation, followed by snowshoeing, 62% and downhill skiing/ snowboarding and reindeer safari both 54%. Cross-country skiing and ice fishing were tried by 23% while no-one

participated to the trip to Santa's Village. 85% of the respondents were satisfied with activity availability and 92% with selection of activities, both a bit lower than the average satisfaction. 62% would have like to have learned more facts about Finland during their holiday however, which is around 20% more than the average. The overall rate for the price paid was 54% satisfied, 31% somewhat satisfied and the rest neutral, mean 1,6 (average 1,41). Ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere got a mean of 1,4 with 62% satisfaction, ability to meet or exceed expectations 38% satisfied, 54% somewhat, mean 1,6, both being again higher than the overall averages. Everyone would recommend to others, 84% would return. Nine respondents out of thirteen mentioned the activities or a particular activity as the best thing on their holiday.

From nine respondents that used the word "looked", six were females, over half, five respondents were 46-55 years old, seven were travelling with their family. 50% of the respondents stayed in the hotel and 50% in the cabins. Accommodation scored a mean of 1,51 with the lowest of 2,56 of technology available (overall mean 2,21) and best 1,11 of cleanliness and comfortability of the room, thus being more satisfied than the overall group with means 1,27 and 1,4. The restaurant services also scored more positive mean of 1,39, compared to the average of 1,53. All respondents participated in downhill skiing/ snowboarding, seven of them to snowmobile safari and dog sledding. All nine respondents were 100% satisfied to activity availability and selection of activities. Five respondents said that the husky-safari was their favourite activity, two selected skiing, one snowmobiling and one snow mobile- and reindeer-safari. Overall mean for Crystal guide was 1,03, she also received good open feedback. Slopes scored a mean of 1,22, lifts 1,67, lift-operators service attitude 1 and slopes fulfilling expectations 1,33. Overall mean from the resort area was 1,14, in which attractiveness, cleanliness and climate conditions all had 1 mean. The lowest score was from technology, mean 1,56. The overall holiday rating means were: the value for the price paid, 1,33, resort's ability to provide relaxing atmosphere 1 and resort's ability to meet or exceed expectations 1,11. From nine respondents eight would recommend the resort to others and seven would re-visit. What did you like the most about your holiday:

*"everything, it was like being in heaven as I was really looking forward to a wooden lodge with a log fire and snow and i had everything i wanted"*

*"Skiing. Quiet resort. Friendly hotel."*

*"Everything, it was more than i was expecting"*

*"Our snowboarding instructor Mikko was really good"*

*"Lots of snow, cold and lots of activities and the food was good."*

*"Loved it all- even falling over whilst learning to ski ☺"*

*"The snow, friendliness of staff & guests"*

To find out whether there were satisfaction differences between genders, male and female respondents were compared. In TABLE 10 overall satisfaction means have been presented, 1 indicating the most satisfied. The biggest difference was in *"The value for the price paid"*, where males were less satisfied. The total scores only had 0,6 difference, females being more satisfied than males.

*TABLE 10. Satisfaction means according to gender*

	Male (n=39)	Female (n=45)
Satisfaction to accommodation	1,47	1,53
Satisfaction to restaurant services	1,56	1,53
Satisfaction to activity selection and availability	1,07	1,11
Satisfaction to Crystal guide	1,09	1,03
Satisfaction to slopes and lifts	1,38	1,3
Satisfaction to resort area	1,37	1,3
The value for the price paid	1,51	1,3
Resort's ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere	1,18	1,09
Resort's ability to meet or exceed your expectations	1,33	1,27
Total	1,33	1,27

In *TABLE 11* satisfaction means are displayed according to age. The biggest respondent group were from 36 to 45 year olds with 25 respondents, followed by the 46 to 55 years olds with 23 respondents. The 18 to 25 year olds had the best total mean, 1,21 followed by the 46-55 year olds. The least satisfied group were the 26 to 35 year olds.

*TABLE 11. Satisfaction means according to age group*

Years old	17 or under (n=6)	18-25 (n=5)	26-35 (n=10)	36-45 (n=25)	46-55 (n=23)	56 or over (n=16)	Total (n=85)
Satisfaction to accommodation	1,38	1,11	1,69	1,55	1,48	1,54	<b>1,46</b>
Satisfaction to restaurant services	1,70	1,36	1,88	1,55	1,36	1,6	<b>1,58</b>
Satisfaction to activity selection and availability	1,17	1,1	1,1	1,07	1,07	1,13	<b>1,11</b>
Satisfaction to slopes and lifts	1,25	1,25	1,78	1,26	1,35	1,31	<b>1,37</b>
Satisfaction to resort area	1,42	1,03	1,51	1,34	1,24	1,44	<b>1,33</b>
The value for the price paid	1	1,8	1,5	1,38	1,3	1,63	<b>1,44</b>
Resort's ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere	1,17	1	1,4	1,08	1,04	1,31	<b>1,17</b>
Resort's ability to meet or exceed your expectations	1,17	1	1,5	1,38	1,17	1,5	<b>1,29</b>
Total	1,28	1,21	1,54	1,33	1,25	1,43	<b>1,34</b>



## 6 CONCLUSION

While the changing tourism industry poses a challenge to entrepreneurs, understanding the methods to attract and retain customers is crucial. Growing numbers of foreign visitors combined with decreasing domestic traveller volume force the industry to construct a deeper understanding towards cultural differences. To select a holiday destination or to re-visit, one needs to feel a possibility to gain value. The quality of the holiday is connected to the overall satisfaction that defines the actual outcome: whether the benefit is higher than the input.

Around 470 Crystal customers visited Iso-Syöte during the ski season 2012-2013. According to entrepreneur Tarja Terentjeff (discussion 20.1.2013.), they are the main customer group in mid-winter and thus very important consumer cluster for the resort. By studying their satisfaction towards service quality in Iso-Syöte, the author wished to uncover areas that either need improvement or are working so well, that they could be used as a method to attract new customers as well as keep the old ones. Acknowledging customer needs enables growth in traveller volume, and so, an increase in sales.

Customer satisfaction is often said to be the main reason for interest towards service quality. It does not mean however that if the customer satisfaction is already on a desired level it should not be improved. Quality development is an on-going process that requires constant work. The requirements transform while customers change and that is what makes an up-to date understanding vital for every business in the customer service industry.

The results of the research and conclusions drawn from them mostly support the theoretical framework of the thesis. According to the results service quality and customer satisfaction are tightly linked together, and greatly dependent on the relationship between customer expectations and perceptions. One of the most important factors influencing the satisfaction seemed to be the service skills of the staff members and the fun aspect of the holiday.

The findings suggest that customer satisfaction and service quality are at a satisfactory level in Iso-Syöte as the overall score from every field lay between satisfied and somewhat satisfied. Also guests' willingness to further recommend the resort suggests that the overall satisfaction was

highly positive. Yet there are multiple aspects that require development and further consideration in order to reach the commissioners goals. As the world moves forward, so do the customers and as mentioned in Chapter 2: continuous improvement and minimizing error are keys to quality (Lecklin 2006, 18).

Three central findings were made from the results. Firstly the importance of meeting customers' *minimum expectations* was noticed: not succeeding in this seemed to raise dissatisfaction greatly. Lack of working Wi-Fi connection was mentioned throughout both of the surveys. It gained a noteworthy amount of negative feedback. In today's world, functioning Internet connection is seen as a standard, thus, if there were a possibility to provide a working Wi-Fi connection, it would most probably not only raise the satisfaction of the customers but also increase their usage of social media while on holiday. This could then create buzz and positive word-of-mouth. The same observation was made in relation to double beds. For many customers it is clear that there is a double bed in a double room and if not, guest may feel disappointed as his minimum expectations are not fulfilled.

The second finding was the importance of trying to minimise the *explicit expectations*. The study proved that customers who expected to see the Northern Lights but did not see them were overall less satisfied than the average. Expectations towards seeing the Aurora Borealis were unrealistic and so caused dissatisfaction. After disappointment it might be possible that the customer do not want to return to the resort, but will instead choose competitor options.

Thirdly the guide's participation was proved to be a very important aspect in a successful holiday. While revealing their favourite activity, guests justified their selections. *Guide* and *fun*, *scenery/place* and *ski school in skiing/snowboarding* were the most mentioned articles. It proposes *functional quality* being more important for the customers than *technical*. It contributes with Grönroos' theory of staff members possessing the intellectual capital that makes them the most valuable resource for the business (2007, 8). This supports the idea that focusing efforts on guide/instructor professionalism and training in terms of language, cultural aspects and knowledge about the surroundings is worth the trouble and truly makes a difference to customer satisfaction. Guide professionalism, friendliness and language skills were rated highly throughout the surveys these scores serve as a positive indicator of service quality.

In addition to the main results there were several other issues that became apparent from the research outcomes. Ideas have been shortly presented below.

The results suggested that not everybody was satisfied with the safety aspect. It is important, not only for being one of the six influencers that affect customer experience and perception (Williams & Buswell 2003, 14-15) but it also is one of the basic human needs. People may find it difficult to fully enjoy their time if they do not feel completely secure at all times. It may be worthwhile to pay extra attention to sustainability. The environment is one of the main selling articles in Iso-Syöte and sustainability can be seen as part of environment (Williams & Buswell 2003, 14-15).

The respondents were mostly satisfied with the restaurant staff, indicating that performance has been good and met customer expectancies. The overall result with regards to staff enthusiasm to anticipate special requests seemed lower than the other responses, but the reason might be people answering “neutral” if they did not have any special requests. There was dissatisfaction towards the variety and quality of food. According to the open answers, satisfaction may increase if the changes requested were provided. It may be important to pay attention to minor details in order to raise perceived quality and satisfaction. Even though eggs on the breakfast table may seem small, variety in them may actually raise satisfaction of this special customer group. While every guest is an individual, offering English options during Crystal weeks could be a good idea. Food preferred may be quite similar between group members in comparison to Finnish taste. It could also be beneficial to make sure there is a member of staff at least in the first morning strolling around, meeting and greeting the new guests and possibly telling a few words about the dishes. Serving the drinks to the table would probably both make the customer feel special and include a possibility for additional sale.

Overall guests seemed to be happy with the activities available there was however some comments about overlapping. If changes in schedule would be possible, avoiding overlapping and providing every customer a chance to try all the activities desired would be an ideal situation. Even though it seems that there is no need for activity improvements, continuous improvement is said to be part of service quality hence continuous development is recommended (Lecklin 2006, 18).

With the negative feedback that Santa’s village received, it may be worthwhile dropping it from the activity selection, as it seems to increase negative experiences. Maybe the “Santa effect”

could be utilised in some other activities in order to add value. One idea could be a snowmobile safari where the guide could tell stories about Christmas and show some places that are similar to those up at the Arctic Circle.

Cross-country skiing was attended by the smallest amount of guests after Santa's village. The number of customers may grow if edutainment would be implemented. Over 40% of the guests would have like to have learned more facts about Finland. Skiing could be offered as an experience rather than a ski school product. If the skiing experience would contain information about Finnish culture or history and stops in interesting traditional spots, it could last longer and the charge could be higher. As a traditional experience it might also sound more appealing to the customer than a ski school lesson.

Even though the least favourite activity was questioned, the author's goal was to receive feedback from the activities rather than figure out the least popular one. The least favourite activity was focused on in order to get a comprehensive opinion of an activity and to avoid guests picking their favourites and only giving satisfied answers.

From attention to safety downhill skiing/snowboarding scored the weakest mean, it suggests that attention to it needs improvement. As the report does not show the difference between ski school customers and other skiers/snowboarders, the reasons for guests feeling unsafe are more difficult to reveal. Information leaflets about the risks on the slopes and how they should act whilst skiing may be one solution. This would increase guest knowledge regarding the correct behaviour on the slopes and most importantly would help them to feel safe. The leaflet could be substituted for a presentation from an instructor during lessons. Snowmobile safari got only satisfied responses relating to attention to safety which is very positive and can be seen as proof that a lot of effort has been focused on that area and that it has been a success.

Activities could have better fulfilled guest expectancies, as the overall satisfaction mean was 2,33. It was not asked what the customers actually expected thus it is difficult to figure out why they were or were not satisfied. When looking at the further feedback it seems that responses related to downhill skiing/snowboarding was actually feedback regarding the supporting services rather than relating to the activity itself. It was also mentioned in the responses that slopes for experienced skiers are limited. To avoid the high expectancy, it may be a good idea to provide people with the clear message that the resort is mostly for beginners and intermediate

skiers/riders. Perhaps more importantly than concentrating on how the slopes and lifts actually are, may be preparing guests for what is coming. By offering good instructions and knowledge about the slopes, expectations may be better fulfilled. The lift operators' professionalism can be straight mirrored to the guides and instructors importance discussed earlier in this Chapter.

The lack of services affects the overall satisfaction towards the area; dining and shopping are few in Iso-Syöte. The research results support Williams and Buswell's theory regarding challenges for compiling working infrastructure whilst preserving nature (2003, 14-15). The customers seem to find the area attractive and they are rather satisfied with the area and the climate conditions compared to their expectancies. It suggests that the information customers receive about the area before arriving equals reality.

Looking at the words that appeared multiple times in the open feedback relating to the best aspects of the holiday will show what features were most valuable for the guests. Those characteristics might be worth using in the marketing communication as they probably are important aspects for others that have already experienced or are still to experience similar holidays. These words also give the indication which features are important to enhance in order to keep them as an advantage in the future as well. It might be beneficial to consider aspects that these concepts could be supported with, what actions would make the winter wonderland even more magical or what would further improve the atmosphere.

Knowledge on the product has an effect on the expectations and also on the level of satisfaction. Seven guests that had visited Iso-Syöte previously probably had clear expectations about their holiday. However the overall mean suggests that the re-visiting customers were actually approximately **not** more satisfied with their holiday experience than the first time customers. Their loyalty may still be very important for the resort as loyalty can be seen as evidence of satisfaction (Peppers & Rogers 2011, 31) and vice versa (Mukherjee 2006, 19). The same result applied to guests that had received a reference. Opposite to Peppers and Rogers' (2011, 141) claim that customers that had received a recommendation tend to be more satisfied, the results indicated that they were actually at the same level as customers from other marketing channels.

There were differences when the satisfaction between age groups was compared. 26-35 years old respondents were the least satisfied group, their main concern being the restaurant, accommodation and the slopes & lifts. This suggests that while youngsters may have seen, been

and so got used to modern infrastructure, they were still satisfied with the service aspects of their holiday. Competing with modern facilities may not be worthwhile if the resort does not actually possess them. By concentrating on service and traditional restaurant and accommodation straight from the beginning of introducing the resort to them may help to set customer expectations accordingly. The next least satisfied group were the 56 and over. They rated the restaurant services low, as well as the accommodation and value for the price paid. This customer group has probably travelled before and has expectancies. Being senior citizens they may also value familiar aspects from home while on holiday. This might be the language or well-known selection on the breakfast table. The value for the price paid is an important indicator for the overall holiday satisfaction and a low score suggests that the customer did not get all the value from the holiday they were expecting.

From customers that replied to the ski school questionnaire over half had had ski school lessons previously and so most probably possessed experience and expectations accordingly. 95% satisfaction, however, seems to be a very high score. It suggests that the service in Iso-Syöte ski school has been at least as good as in the ski school that one has used before. Satisfaction regarding instructors was also remarkably high, indicating that the professionalism and training has been successful. The parts that seemed to need some improvement were *content of the lesson*, *usage of varying teaching methods* and *feedback after the lesson*, *follow up-information*. By paying attention to these three aspects the satisfaction level could be lifted even higher. The content and the varying methods are both connected to the **fun aspect** that was found to be one of the most important things for the customer in terms of value. By adding fun the customer is not only likely to be more satisfied with the instructor's service but also with the overall experience. By paying attention to the lastly mentioned aspect, feedback after the lesson, the instructor has a chance to trigger a re-sale by advising what would be the next step if the customer would continue taking lessons. Also giving personal feedback and ideas on how to keep practising may positively affect customers' opinion in service quality and enhance the personal aspect of the relationship between the instructors. This is an important aspect in retaining customers, as discussed in Chapter 3, personal recognition increases the perceived value level.

## 7 DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to find out how international customers' satisfaction could be enhanced in a ski-resort in order to increase the number of visitors and ultimately the volume of sales. The study was carried out at the Iso-Syöte ski resort. After studying the features that have the greatest impact on customer satisfaction, service quality was selected to be the main research aspect. The research method was selected to be customer satisfaction survey, which was divided into two separate entities.

The main results of the study suggested that service quality greatly affected Crystal customers overall satisfaction. They were generally very satisfied with service quality even though there were some issues that may require development. Three main findings from the research results were: importance of satisfying customers' minimum expectations, minimising the explicit expectations and highlighting the guides' professionalism. Other further suggestions were specified according to the feedback received regarding the accommodation, restaurant, activities and the resort area. The researcher's development ideas were based on the theoretical framework and the research results. The outcomes may be utilised to some extent by any tourism or restaurant business that deals with international customers.

In this thesis a combination of quantitative and qualitative method was used in order to find answers to the research question. The method of describing the features of services for the customer to rate is widely used in academic research in business (Grönroos 2007, 82), while collecting quantitative data is more complex but enables deeper understanding (Trochim 2006, accessed 20.1.2013). Combined method was chosen because whilst the time for conducting the study was relatively short and the resources were limited, the author still wanted to gain a deeper insight into the matter. The satisfaction survey method was considered to be an effective tool as the Crystal customers already formed a cluster, they were easy to contact and there was a chance to collect a reasonably high number of responses in a short period of time. The study was satisfactorily reliable as any other researcher could perform the survey and get the same results. There was an opportunity for error as the guide dealt out and collected the surveys. Hence respondents may have felt that they do not want to answer anything else than positive towards them. The scaling used in questionnaires could have been different in order to get more precise answers, for example from highly satisfied to highly dissatisfied. The rather big and representative

sample as well as careful researcher strengthened the reliability. The research was acceptably valid as it gave answers to the research and supporting questions. (Rönkkö, 2012.)

The most important reason to pursue service quality is said to be customer satisfaction. In this thesis the bond between those variables has been studied. There are other reasons to enhance service quality however. Service quality inside an organisation is very important in terms of effectiveness and personnel satisfaction. Studying company service quality in the Iso-Syöte area would be an interesting focus for further research. It would probably be very important for the entrepreneurs as well when considering co-operational work between businesses in the resort area.

In the opinion of the researcher, the thesis succeeded to give answers to the research question and can be used to provide development ideas not only in Iso-Syöte but in other tourism organisations as well. Thesis can be used as a base when creating similar satisfaction surveys or when otherwise studying customer satisfaction and service quality.

The process was very interesting as even though service quality and particularly customer satisfaction were quite familiar to the author, the research offered a change to further study phenomena. One main finding for the author was the importance of planning ahead as many problems occurred whilst it was missing. Lack of experience in statistical field and lack of thorough knowledge about the Iso-Syöte Hotel also offered great challenges but rewarded in the end. During the thesis process the author gained experience on working with busy tourism entrepreneurs and understood that the personal relationships are crucial in business.

Succeeding in this work alone would have been impossible and there were multiple people that helped me during the process. I would like to thank especially Crystal guide Katarina Hanzalikova without whom the study would not have succeeded. I would also like to thank entrepreneurs Tarja Terentjeff and Juha Kuukasjärvi as well as the ski school manager Mikko Terentjeff for all the support during the past season. Lastly special thanks to Senior Lecturer Jyrki Holappa and my opponents Lotta Haapaniemi and Tiina Kutilainen.



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## APPENDICES

### KUUSAMO TOURISM STATISTICS- NOVEMBER 2012

### APPENDIX 1



#### Yöpymiset + 5 % tammi-marraskuussa

Kuusamon majoitusliikkeiden rekisteröidyt yöpymiset (412.100) lisääntyivät tammi-marraskuussa edellisvuodesta 4,9 %. Nousu tuli suurimaksi osaksi ulkomailta (84.500, + 17,6 %). Kotimaasta kirjattiin 2,0 %:n lisäys yöpymisluvuissa (327.600). Yli puolet ulkomaalaisista tuli Venäjältä yöpymismäärän (43.300) lisääntyessä 3 %. Saksalaiset olivat toiseksi suurin ulkomaalaisryhmä (8.000, + 17 %) ennen brittejä (7.900 (+ 328 %), hollantilaisia (3.500, - 21 %), ukrainalaisia (2.500, + 7 %) ja ranskalaisia (2.500, + 170 %).

Vuonna 2011 Kuusamon yöpymiset (440.800) lisääntyivät edellisvuodesta 3,0 %. Nousua tuli sekä kotimaasta (351.700, + 3,0 %) että ulkomailta (89.100, + 2,7 %). Lähemmäs 60 % ulkomaalaisista tuli Venäjältä yöpymismäärän (51.100) lisääntyessä selvästi eli 38 %. Saksalaisyöpymisistä kertyi 7.900 (+ 6 %), hollantilaisyöpymisistä 5.200 (- 49 %), brittiyöpymisistä 4.300 (- 48 %) ja ukrainalaisyöpymisistä 3.200 (+ 1 %).

#### Kesän yöpymiset ulkomailta + 24 %

Kesällä 2012 (touko-lokakuu) Kuusamon rekisteröidyt yöpymiset (161.400) lisääntyivät edellisvuodesta 2,8 %. Kasvu tuli lähes kokonaan ulkomailta (21.100, + 24,3 %) kotimaasta saapuneiden yöpymismäärän (140.300) lisääntyessä aavistuksen verran eli 0,2 %. Eniten ulkomaalaisia tuli Venäjältä (7.700, - 5 %) ja Saksasta (4.000, + 31 %). Talvella 2011-12 (marras-huhtikuu) yöpymiset (301.000) lisääntyivät Kuusamossa 8,6 % ulkomaisen kysynnän (81.700 yöpymistä) kasvessa selvästi eli 26,0 %. Kotimaasta tulleiden (219.300) yöpymiset sen sijaan lisääntyivät selvästi vähemmän eli 3,3 %. Yli puolet ulkomaalaisyöpymisistä tuli Venäjältä (45.600), jossa oli lisäystä edellisvuodesta 20 %. Iso-Britanniasta yöpymisistä kirjattiin 9.600 (+ 451 %), Saksasta 5.600 (+ 29 %), Alankomaista 3.600 (- 33 %), Ukrainasta 2.800 (- 14 %) ja Ranskasta 1.600 (+ 241 %).

#### Kuusamo Levin edellä

Matkailukeskuskohteissa vertailussa Kuusamon (Ruka) edellä rekisteröidyissä yöpymisissä olivat tammi-marraskuussa Sotkamo (Vuokatti) ja Rovaniemi. Levi, Himos ja Ylläs olivat Rukan perässä. Kotimaisissa yöpymisissä Kuusamo oli Rovaniemen edellä. Ulkomaisissa yöpymisissä Rovaniemi, Levi ja Saariselkä olivat Rukan edellä.

Marraskuussa Kuusamo (Ruka) oli Vuokatin ja niukasti Rovaniemen perässä, mutta Levin ja Saariselän edellä. Kotimaisissa yöpymisissä järjestys oli sama, mutta ulkomaisissa Kuusamo (Ruka) oli toisena ja lähes tasoissa Rovaniemen kanssa.

#### Käyttöaste ja keskihinnassa vähän muutoksia

Kaikkien majoitusliikkeiden\* huonekäyttöaste oli Kuusamossa tammi-marraskuussa 36,5 % eli täsmälleen sama kuin edellisvuonna. Marraskuussa käyttöaste (33,8 %) jäi toisaalta melko selvästi edellisvuoden arvon (37,5 %) alapuolelle.

Yöpymisessä keskihinta oli Kuusamossa tammi-marraskuussa 34,13 € eli hiukan alempi kuin vuotta aikaisemmin (34,41 €). Marraskuussa keskihinta (35,43 €) oli vajaan euron edellisvuoden marraskuun arvon (34,62 €) yläpuolella.

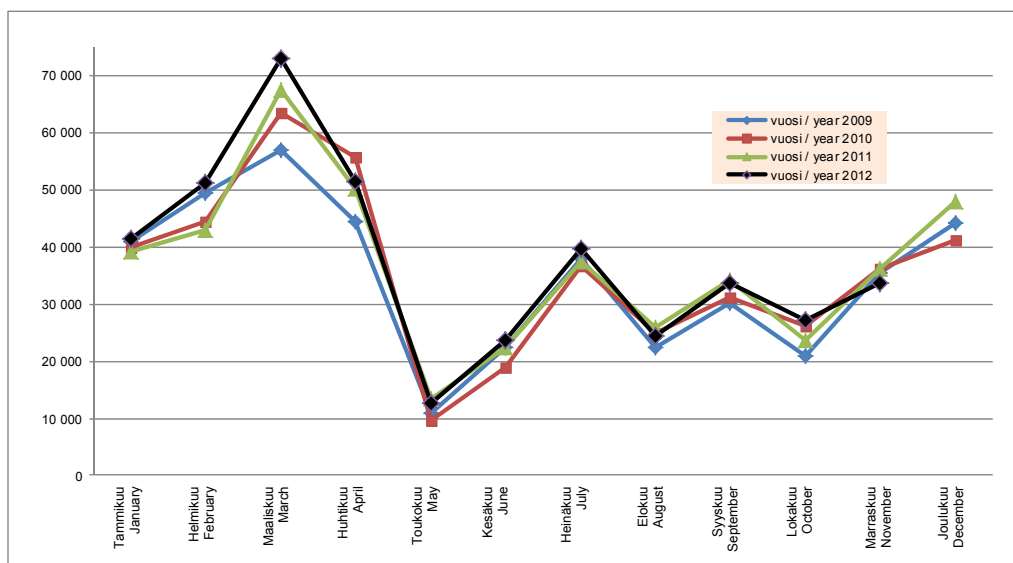
Koko maassa kaikkien majoitusliikkeiden käyttöaste oli tammi-marraskuussa 49,8 % yöpymisen keskihinnan ollessa 49,92 €.

Majoitusmyynnin arvo oli Kuusamossa tammi-marraskuussa 14,06 milj. € eli noin 540.000 € suurempi kuin vuotta aiemmin (13,53 milj. €). Vuoden 2011 majoitusmyynti oli 15,36 milj. € eli noin 650.000 € korkeampi kuin vuotta aiemmin (14,70 milj. €).

Kuusamon tilastoissa mukana oleva rekisteröity majoituskapasiteetti oli marraskuussa 4.072 vuodetta eli 172 (- 4,1 %) pienempi kuin vuotta aiemmin. Vuoden 2011 keskimääräinen vuodekapasiteetti oli 4.220 eli noin 323 (+ 8,3 %) vuodepaikkaa enemmän kuin vuonna 2010.

\* sis. majoitusliikkeet (hotellit, retkeilymajat, lomakylät, leirintäalueet yms.), joissa vähintään 10 huonetta tai mökkiä

#### Yöpymiset kuukausittain Kuusamossa



*Satisfaction to instructor*

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Professionalism (n=71)	69	2	-	-	-	1,03
Friendliness (n=71)	69	2	-	-	-	1,03
Clearness of instructions (n=71)	69	2	-	-	-	1,03
Appearance (n=71)	71	-	-	-	-	1
Language skills (n=71)	71	-	-	-	-	1
Content of the lesson (n=71)	66	5	-	-	-	1,07
Usage of interesting and varying teaching methods (n=71)	65	6	-	-	-	1,08
Attention to safety issues (n=71)	69	2	-	-	-	1,03
Feedback during the lesson (n=71)	66	3	2	-	-	1,1
Feedback after the lesson, follow-up information (n=71)	63	5	3	-	-	1,15
Total (n=710)	678	27	5	-	-	1,05

*Satisfaction to tour guide*

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Mean 1-5
Always greeting warmly when meeting (n=88)	86	2	-	-	-	1,02
Service attitude (n=88)	85	3	-	-	-	1,03
Professionalism (n=88)	85	3	-	-	-	1,03
Friendliness (n=88)	85	3	-	-	-	1,03
Information sharing (n=87)	82	5	-	-	-	1,06
Anticipation towards special requests (n=86)	77	3	6	-	-	1,17
Availability when needed (n=88)	86	1	1	-	-	1,03
Did the guide fulfil your expectations (n=88)	85	3	-	-	-	1,03
Total (n=613)	671	23	7	-	-	1,05

## SKI SCHOOL SATISFACTION SURVEY 1/2

## Ski school customer satisfaction survey

Please fill in by choosing the most suitable answers



## General information

## 1. Age

☐ 17 or under ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 or over

## 2. Are you travelling

☐ Alone ☐ With partner ☐ With family ☐ With friend(s) ☐ Other

## 3. Have you been Iso-Syöte ski school's customer before?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## 4. Have you had ski school lessons elsewhere?

☐ Yes ☐ No

## 5. Did you purchase your lessons prior to your arrival?

☐ Yes- Please go to part "Ski School & Instructor" ☐ No

## 6. Reservation

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Availability of ski school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easiness of making the reservation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## 7. From where did you purchase your lessons?

☐ Ski school counter ☐ Crystal guide ☐ Hotel reception ☐ Other, where; 

## Ski school &amp; Instructor

## 8. Who was your instructor?

## 9. How satisfied you were

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Receiving a warm greeting upon arrival	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informing possible schedule changes (please answer only if there were changes)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff anticipating special requests/needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Price-quality ratio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



## SKI SCHOOL SATISFACTION SURVEY 2/2

### 10. How satisfied you were to your instructor(s)

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Professionalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clearness of instructions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Content of the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Usage of interesting and varying teaching methods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to safety issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback during the lesson	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feedback after the lesson, follow-up information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### 11. Did you experience any problems with us?

☐ Yes ☐ No- Please go to question 13

### 12. If you reported any problems, were you satisfied with the solution?

☐ I did not report ☐ Satisfied ☐ Somewhat Satisfied ☐ Neutral ☐ Somewhat Dissatisfied ☐ Dissatisfied

### 13. Would you use our services again?

☐ Definitely ☐ Probably ☐ Unsure ☐ Probably Not ☐ Definitely Not

### 14. Would you recommend us to others?

☐ Definitely ☐ Probably ☐ Unsure ☐ Probably Not ☐ Definitely Not

### 15. How would you improve our operation?

**Mikko and the Team are grateful for your answers.**

**We want to succeed in every lesson,  
your answers are valuable for us in order to be able to improve.**

**THANK YOU 😊**

**KIITOS!**

HOTEL & SAFARIS SATISFACTION SURVEY 1/5

Dear Guest,

We are pleased that you selected Iso-Syöte as your travel destination and hope you have enjoyed your holiday. It is our aim to create and maintain courteous and friendly surroundings for you to experience.

We are enthusiastic to develop our services ever better and would appreciate if you could take a few minutes time to fill in this questionnaire.

Thank you for your kind assistance.

Iso-Syöte Hotel & Safaris Team





### General Information

**1. Gender**

☐ Male ☐ Female

**2. Age**

☐ 17 or under ☐ 18-25 ☐ 26-35 ☐ 36-45 ☐ 46-55 ☐ 56 or over

**3. Are you travelling**

☐ Alone ☐ With partner ☐ With friend(s) ☐ With family, please specify the age(s) of your children:  ☐ Other

**4. Have you been Hotel & Safaris Iso-Syöte customer before?**

☐ Yes ☐ No

**5. Why did you choose Iso-Syöte as your destination?**

### Accommodation

**6. Where did you stay**

☐ Cabin ☐ Hotel

**7. How satisfied were you with your accommodation**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology available (internet and cable television)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to sustainability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to safety (door locks and emergency exits)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Was the room comfortable?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the accommodation fulfill your expectations?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**8. How would you improve the accommodation?**

**Restaurant**

**9. How satisfied were you with the restaurant services**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Appearance of the premises	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff appearance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff professionalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff language skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff friendliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Staff enthusiasm to anticipate special requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Late night program/ bands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**10. Was there some particular dish(es) missing from breakfast, lunch and/or dinner?**

☐ Yes, please specify:  ☐ No

**11. How would you improve the restaurant services?**

**Crystal Tour Guide**

**19. What is the name of your guide**

**20. How satisfied were you with your guide**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Always greeting warmly when meeting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service attitude	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professionalism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Friendliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information sharing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anticipation towards special requests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Availability when needed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the guide fulfill your expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**21. How would you improve the guide services?**

HOTEL & SAFARIS SATISFACTION SURVEY 4/5

Activities

12. Which activities did you participate in

- ☐ Cross-country skiing   ☐ Downhill skiing/snowboarding   ☐ Snow mobile safari   ☐ Dog sledding   ☐ Reindeer safari   ☐ Snowshoeing   ☐ Ice fishing   ☐ Santa's secret cottage

13. How satisfied were you with

- |                         | Satisfied             | Somewhat Satisfied    | Neutral               | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied          | No opinion            |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Activity availability   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Selection of activities | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

14. Was there some particular activity missing from the selection?

- ☐ Yes, please specify:  ☐ No

15. Which was your favorite activity and why?

16. Which was your **least** favorite activity? If you only participated in one activity please select that.

- ☐ Cross-country skiing   ☐ Downhill skiing/Snowboarding   ☐ Snow mobile safari   ☐ Dog sledding   ☐ Reindeer safari   ☐ Snowshoeing   ☐ Ice fishing   ☐ Santa's secret cottage

17. Please evaluate your **least** favorite activity (selected in question 16)

- |   | Satisfied             | Somewhat Satisfied    | Neutral               | Somewhat Dissatisfied | Dissatisfied          | No opinion            |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Content of the activity                     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Standard of the equipment                   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attention to safety issues                  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Attention to environmental issues           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Guide service attitude                      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Guide professionalism                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Guide language skills                       | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Guide friendliness                          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Did the activity fulfill your expectations? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

18. During your holiday, did you learn any facts about Finland? ( including information about flora & fauna, nature and history)

- ☐ Yes   ☐ Yes, but I would like to have learned more   ☐ No, but I would like to have learned   ☐ No

**Iso-Syöte area in general****22. Did you downhill ski or snowboard**

☐ Yes ☐ No, please go to question 23

**23. How satisfied were you with**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Slopes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lifts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lift operators service attitude	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the slopes fulfill your expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**24. How satisfied you were with the resort area**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
Services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attractiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cleanliness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology (including Wi-Fi and ticketing system)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attention to safety issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of guest in the area (was it too crowded)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the area fulfill your expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Did the climate conditions fulfill your expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**25. Did you experience any problems with us?**

☐ Yes, please specify:  ☐ No

**26. If you reported any problems, were you satisfied with the solution?**

☐ Yes ☐ No, please specify:

**27. Overall, how would you rate your holiday**

	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied
The value for the price paid	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resort's ability to provide a relaxing atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resort's ability to meet or exceed you expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**28. Would you come to Iso-Syöte again?**

☐ Yes ☐ No, please specify:

**29. Would you recommend us to others?**

☐ Yes ☐ No, please specify:

**30. What did you like the most about your holiday?**

**31. Please feel free to give us further feedback**


We are very grateful for your feedback, thank you!

Have a safe trip home and welcome back 😊